



**COOL'S  
NOTES**

# **ATTENDING MUSIC CONFERENCES 101**

**A comprehensive guide to maximizing  
your music conference experience.**

**DAVE COOL**

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# INTRODUCTION

## DEAR AWESOME PERSON READING THIS,

Welcome to the very first edition of "Cool's Notes", an eBook series for musicians. These eBooks will contain my thoughts on different subjects in the music industry, and will feature interviews with top industry experts and insight from artists themselves.

This edition of "Cool's Notes" is about making the most of your music conference experience. My hope is that the information contained in this eBook will save you time, save you some money, and help you build long-term relationships that will result in opportunities for years to come.

My goal is to continually improve each edition of "COOL'S NOTES" through feedback from you. So if there is something I missed, or if there is someone you think I should interview in the future, please get in touch through my website, I'd love to hear from you:

[www.davecool.ca](http://www.davecool.ca)

Cheers!



# 1

## PRE-CONFERENCE PLANNING

So you're going to be attending a music conference? Awesome. Music conferences are one of my favourite things in the world. They're an amazing opportunity to network, meet new people, re-connect with old friends, and move your career forward.

Before even setting foot at the conference, there's a lot you can do to better prepare yourself and make the most of your conference experience. But before we get into preparations, let's talk about why most artists are interested in music conferences in the first place: showcases.

### 1.1 GETTING A CONFERENCE SHOWCASE

Let's face it, every artist wants to get a showcase at a conference, but there are very few slots available for the "official" showcases. In selecting showcase artists, conferences often use a mix of hand-picked selections, Sonicbids submissions, and sometimes direct submissions either through mail or e-mail. And keep in mind that conferences often select official showcases months before the conference starts, which means that the submissions deadline is even earlier. Be prepared to plan ahead if you're looking to apply as an official showcase artist.

If this is your first music conference, being hand-picked to showcase is unlikely to happen, so you'll focus your energy on either submitting through Sonicbids or a direct submission. Check the conference website, and if they take either type of submission, choose the one that you prefer.

#### SONICBIDS SUBMISSIONS:

"Act like you care and show that you've taken the time to make it look good and professional. Make sure the EPK is complete, you have great photos (ideally a combination from both live shows and promo shots); your calendar is complete with both past and future dates; you link to great reviews; include a video of a live performance; be witty and clever with your elevator pitch and bio. And, if you have great social media stats or have won any awards, by all means MAKE IT STAND OUT."

– Panos Panay (Founder, [Sonicbids](#))

### A few things to keep in mind before submitting your Sonicbids EPK:

- What kind of music does the conference generally book? Look at the styles of music they have listed in their opportunity and make sure that you can fit within that. Some artists waste a lot of time and money submitting to conferences that simply don't book their style of music.
- Make sure that your EPK is complete. Include several photos, and most importantly, have your gig calendar up to date, **including past dates**. You might be surprised how often bookers look to see not only where, but how often you've played in the past.

Once your EPK is complete and up-to-date, you can send in your submission. Every submission must be reviewed by the conference, so if you think yours was not reviewed, speak to Sonicbids about it. They take it very seriously if a conference does not review all of their submissions.

### DIRECT SUBMISSIONS:

If a conference takes submissions directly, the most important thing to do is to carefully read the submission requirements. Then read them again. Then have a friend read them. Make sure you prepare the package exactly how they would like it. If they only want a one-sheet, don't send a whole press kit. If they want you to send a CD and clearly mark which songs they should listen to, make sure to clearly mark those songs. If they want payment by check, make sure to include the check (and make sure you'll have the money in the bank for them to cash it!). You get the idea.

If the conference simply wants a link to your website/MySpace/EPK, same rules apply as with a Sonicbids submission. Make sure that you have updated your site(s) with your best photos, updated your concert calendar, etc.

Another extremely important thing to do is to be sure that your best songs are featured in a place that is easy for people to find and **listen to**. Not download. Not purchase. Simply listen to. One reason that many bookers still check an artist's MySpace page is because it is just easier to find the artist's music to listen to. Often artist websites have all sorts of bells and whistles and fancy design, and the last thing a booker wants to do is spend 5 minutes trying to find where they can listen to the artist's music. They are extremely busy and have a lot of submissions to consider, make their lives easier by having a clearly marked section on your website for them to listen to your music.

### "UNOFFICIAL" SHOWCASES

Often times there will be even more "unofficial" or "private" showcases during a conference than official showcases. These are sometimes carried out with the blessing of the conference, other times they are

simply shows booked in venues nearby while the conference is going on. As a first time artist, getting an unofficial showcase might be more achievable, but even then, your best bet might be to attend a conference first and talk to people to find out how it works by attending both official and unofficial showcases.

If you are looking to play an unofficial showcase, tread carefully. You don't want to start asking the conference itself how to go about it if they do not authorize those showcases. Almost nothing can get you in their bad books quicker than that. Try doing some research first, talk to other artists/bands and find out how the unofficial showcases work.

If the conference does support unofficial/private showcases, then you can go ahead and ask them how the process works. Often times showcase hosts will pay the conference to be part of the program, so the conference can help you get in touch with the hosts or tell you the procedure on how to apply. But as with applying for an official showcase, private/unofficial showcases cost money to be a part of.

### HOW MANY SHOWCASES TO PLAY?

"I think it's better to play a few quality showcases so you are not overwhelmed and you can focus a good amount of time on networking and attending panels/workshops."

– Madalyn Sklar (Founder, [GoGirlsMusic.com](http://GoGirlsMusic.com))

Let's say you have been chosen to have an official showcase, and you also have the opportunity to play unofficial showcases as well. How many total showcases should you play during the conference? As many as possible? Only the official showcase?

As with most things in life, balance is key. You're at the conference to meet people and build relationships. If you're busy racing from one showcase to another, you're not going to be able to have conversations with people who might have liked your music, and you're also going to risk disrespecting the showcase host and/or conference, as well as the artists who are showcasing after you. So whenever possible, space out your showcases so that you can take the time to talk to people afterwards and catch the next showcasing artist.

“If you play too many showcases, you spend your time running between rooms without the ability to speak to anyone after your showcases, which is the key to making contacts. Besides that, you wear yourself out within the first evening and run the risk of losing your voice or being too physically weary the next day when you have to do it all again.”

– [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

Another reason not to play too many showcases is that you run the risk of burning out before the conference is over. You’ll need to pace yourself, and if you’re playing 3-4 showcases every night, by the 3rd night you’ll no doubt be feeling the effects and might not be able to perform at your best, or worse, you might not be able to perform at all because you’ve lost your voice.

So when planning your showcase schedule, moderation and balance are crucial. Speaking of planning, now it’s time to create a plan for the conference.

## 1.2 CREATING YOUR PLAN

“Research first - take the time to research the conference by going to their web site. Also visit their social network sites. Review the panels, see who is speaking, make a list of who you want to meet. Also check out similar artists/bands performing at the conference that you think would be a good fit for gig swaps.”

– Madalyn Sklar (Founder, [GoGirlsMusic.com](#))

### STEP I: SET GOALS

Oh, so cliché, I know. But clarity is key. Taking the time to write down specifically what you want to achieve at a music conference will give you a much better chance at actually achieving it, rather than just going with the flow and being dictated by outside events or other people.

So what exactly do you want to achieve at the conference? Do you want to get booked at festivals? Meet artists that you can go on tour with? Find a booking agent? Write it all down.

## STEP 2: GET SPECIFIC

OK, now it's time to take your goals and make them as specific as possible. Let's take for example that you want to get booked at festivals.

Here's what you can do:

- Most conferences release a list of attendees. Study it and look for anyone listed as a festival director or representing a festival. Take note of their names. You're going to try and speak to them during the conference.
- Look at the conference schedule: Are there any panels or workshops about festivals? Maybe how to get booked at festivals, or about running festivals in general? Mark them on your calendar. The speakers and some attendees at the panel discussion will no doubt be artistic directors for festivals.
- Also look at the other panels/workshops. Are any of the people on your list speaking on other panels? Take note of those panels as well.
- Look at the list of companies who will have a booth at the trade show during the conference. Are there any festivals that have a booth? This could be the best time to speak to someone from a festival. They're not running off to speak on a panel or watch a showcase, they're right there waiting to talk to people.

I would recommend that you focus on quality of interactions and not quantity. You are simply not going to have the time to meet everyone at the conference, and you're better off having 5 quality conversations where you make a real connection with those people, rather than 100 quick "hellos" with no real connection. You'll get to those other people over time, but prioritize the 5-10 people who you really want to meet.

So a good goal might be to meet 5 artistic directors and have a quality interaction with them. This could be a brief conversation where you make them laugh, or find out something personal about them that you can follow-up on (they really love pug dogs, are passionate about needle-point, etc.). You can use this information later during the follow-up to solidify the connection, which we'll talk about later.

## STEP 3: SCHEDULE IT

Once you've gathered a list of people to talk to, workshops to attend, and booths to visit, it's time to make a schedule. Build around the events with specific dates/times and go from there. Put reminders in your calendar, sync it to your smart phone, and write it in your agenda if you have one.

Yes, I still keep a physical agenda. I just find that writing things down solidifies it in my mind. But don't get me wrong, everything is on my Outlook/Google Calendar, and synced to my iPhone too. You don't have to be as obsessive-compulsive as me, just make sure you put the info somewhere that you're going to check it.



While you're creating your schedule, also look for:

- Cocktails
- Dinners
- Networking Events

All of the above are great opportunities to meet the people who are on your list.

"Network with other musicians that make art that you love. Some of the most successful artists that I have observed at conferences book tours in new markets through new musician contacts."

– Erin Barnhardt (Executive Director, [Folk Music Canada](#))

You might want to also put into your schedule any showcases by artists that you want to meet/work with. Showing them support by attending their showcase is a gesture that will no doubt be appreciated and is a great first step in building a relationship with that artist.

## 1.3 CREATE A BUDGET

Oh no, I can sense your eyes glossing over already, but stay with me. This is going to be really simple, I promise. It's important to know just how much money the conference is going to cost you, so that you don't freak out once you get your credit card bill in the mail. And yes, it is going to cost you money, and probably more than you thought.

You will have to see it as a long-term investment in your career, otherwise you might end up bitterly disappointed. Just try and save money where you can and make the most of the conference. The return on your investment will come over time with the relationships that you started while at the conference, sometimes only "paying off" years later.

## OK, NOW FOR THE FUN PART: CREATING A BUDGET.

Here are items you should have in your budget:

- Conference fees
- Showcase fees
- Marketing Materials (CDs, business cards, one-sheets, download cards, etc.)
- Travel
- Lodging
- Food
- Miscellaneous (something unexpected always comes up)

### Tip: Bring an envelope

To make sure that you have all of your receipts from the conference, bring an envelope with you. Receipts can easily fall out of a folder or get lost in your bag, so an envelope is the simplest and easiest way to keep all of your receipts in one place without losing them. So each time you spend money, from booking your hotel to buying a coffee, keep the receipt and put it in that envelope.

Expense	Budgeted
<b>Conference Fees</b>	\$350.00
<b>Showcase Fees</b>	\$75.00
<b>Marketing Materials</b>	
Posters	\$50.00
Postcards	\$100.00
CDs	\$250.00
Dropcards	\$100.00
<b>Travel</b>	
Flight	\$500.00
Baggage Fees	\$25.00
Taxis	\$30.00
<b>Hotel</b>	\$250.00
<b>Food</b>	
Groceries	\$40.00
Restaurants	\$50.00
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
	\$50.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1,870.00</b>

Download the original spreadsheet here:

[www.davecool.ca/2011/02/sample-music-conference-budget-for-musicians](http://www.davecool.ca/2011/02/sample-music-conference-budget-for-musicians)

Now how are you going to pay for all of this? Good question. Conferences can be very expensive, however, here are some ways you can try and save money when attending a conference:

### I. VOLUNTEER FOR THE CONFERENCE

If you plan far enough ahead, and if you are willing to sacrifice some of your free time while at the conference, offer to volunteer. Conferences are always looking for good volunteers, and you can sometimes get your conference fee waived, or at least it waived on the days that you volunteered.

But be prepared to work hard. If you show up late and you're tired and/or hung-over because of all-night partying, chances are you won't be asked back again. Remember, you might be dealing with the very people who could be deciding whether you get a showcase or not at a future conference. Arrive early. Be extremely polite. Work your butt off. Make new friends. Have a good time. Make the conference proud that they chose you as a volunteer.

## 2. SPLIT HOTEL ROOM WITH SOMEONE

This one is a no-brainer of course. If you're attending a conference alone but want to save money on the hotel room, try and find someone to share the room with. Chances are that there are plenty of other like-minded people in the same boat.

If the conference has a Facebook page, post on their wall that you are looking for a roommate. Same thing for Twitter, follow the conference on Twitter and Tweet that you're looking for a roommate, and politely ask if they could re-tweet (RT) to their followers. You could also tag your tweet with a hashtag # for the conference, so other people can find your tweet in a search.

Another option is contacting the conference by e-mail and asking if they know of anyone looking for a hotel roommate. Chances are they have received similar messages and can put you in touch with those people.

Yet another option is to join any mailing lists that allow group discussion. For example, in the folk/roots music world, there is Maplepost (Canadian folk music community) and the Folk Alliance listserv (described as the definitive listserv for world music enthusiasts). Many people post to those lists looking for roommates at conferences. You can find info about both lists here: [www.ocff.ca/resources.html](http://www.ocff.ca/resources.html)

## 3. BRING YOUR OWN SNACKS/FOOD

One way to save money that your Mom has probably already taught you is to bring a lunch! Specifically, bring lots of snacks. While at a conference, you'll do more snacking than sitting down to eat large meals, as you'll constantly be on the go. Chips and candies are an option, but I would recommend healthier choices like nuts, dried fruit, power bars, etc. Being at a music conference can already put a lot of stress on your system, if you add junk food and high doses of salt and sugar, you're just asking for a crash.

## 4. SHOP FOR GROCERIES

When you check-in to the hotel, ask where the nearest grocery store is. Room service can certainly be convenient late at night, however,

## Bonus Tip: Gig Your Way There

One way artists reduce the costs of attending a conference is by booking a small tour on their way down to the host city. Granted, if this is your first time attending a music conference, it might not be the easiest option. But if you are able to piggy-back with another more experienced artist, or have toured the region before, this can be a nice way to maximize your travel days.

## Bonus Tip for Canadian Artists: Apply for Grants

To all of my Canadian artist friends reading this, if you've been selected to perform an official showcase at a music conference, you can apply for grants to help cover your expenses. Factor, the Canada Council for the Arts and the SOCAN Foundation all have programs to assist artists who are traveling for showcases and/or tours:

- [www.factor.ca](http://www.factor.ca)
- [www.canadacouncil.ca](http://www.canadacouncil.ca)
- [www.socanfoundation.com](http://www.socanfoundation.com)
- As well as CALQ for artists living in the province of Quebec: [www.calq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.calq.gouv.qc.ca)

if you plan ahead, you can save a bunch of money and find healthier options at a grocery store. Load up on the aforementioned healthy snacks, plus pre-made sandwiches (to save on time) and lots of veggies.

### 5. GO TO SHOWCASES THAT HAVE FOOD

Run out of snacks? Couldn't make it to the grocery store before it closed? Don't worry, you don't have to go to bed hungry. Many showcase rooms/venues provide food & snacks as a way of enticing people to come check out the showcase. Keep a look out and ask around, word spreads quickly where to find free food.

### 6. GETTING TO THE CONFERENCE: CARPOOL, BUS, TRAIN

Sometimes travelling by plane is unavoidable. However, often artists will carpool together and make a road trip out of it. Similar to finding hotel roommates, ask around and see if anyone in your town is driving to the conference, or passing through on their way. Every year I hear about carpooling artists heading to Toronto from my hometown of Montreal to go to CMW or NXNE, and sometimes even a long-distance road trip to Austin for SXSW or Memphis for Folk Alliance. If you're on a tight budget, this could be a great money-saver.

If carpooling isn't an option, look for deals to travel by train or bus. Often trains and buses will have free WiFi so you can be productive on your way to the conference.

### 7. STAY AT A CHEAPER HOTEL

Another idea to save some money would be to stay at a different hotel than the one hosting the conference. There will no doubt be other hotels really close to the host hotel that are cheaper. The downside to this of course is that you are somewhat disconnected from the conference. Every time you need to go back to your room, you have to leave the host hotel. And often it's in the elevators and lobbies late at night and early morning where some very fruitful conversations take place. It's definitely an option to save money, but I would recommend trying to stay at the host hotel if possible.

## 1.4 FINAL PREPARATIONS

So your agenda is set, your conference registration is confirmed, and travel/accommodations are finalized. But you're not done just yet. There are a few more things you need to do to be fully prepared.

## MAKE SURE YOUR SHOWCASES ARE LISTED

If you're going to be showcasing, make sure that your showcase details are listed everywhere: your website, MySpace, Facebook, ReverbNation, Sonicbids, etc. To make your life easier, you can update all of your sites at once with services like ArtistData (which was acquired by Sonicbids, so you can do it through your Sonicbids account as well) and ReverbNation.

I've encountered artists who don't list their showcases as gigs since they are often not open to the general public. Here are a few reasons why you should list your showcases:

### 1. People at the conference can find you more easily

Roaming the hallways of the hotel at the OCFE conference in 2010, I didn't bring the conference program with me. I used my iPhone to set my schedule and find showcase times. If there was a specific artist who I really wanted to see, I went to their website to check out their performance schedule. Don't take for granted that conference attendees will completely plan their schedule ahead of time. Often you realize you have a break in your schedule, so you want to try and discover a new artist. Have your showcases listed and increase your chances of people being able to find you.

### 2. It shows you're on top of things

Whenever I go to a conference and see that an artist has listed every showcase they're doing with specific details for each, it impresses me. It shows that they're on top of things, and trust me, with bookers especially, being on top of your gig schedule/listings is a huge plus.

### 3. It looks good

And honestly, the fact that you're showcasing at a conference simply looks good. Announce it to your fans even though they might not be able to attend, it's something to be proud of! And for future booking opportunities, if a booker looks back at your gig history (as they often do), seeing conference showcases can certainly help increase your chances of being booked.

## HAVE YOUR PROMO ITEMS READY

What items will you bring with you to help promote your music? If you're showcasing, flyers/postcards and some posters are a must. But besides that, will you be bringing CDs? Promo CDs/EP's? Download cards?

### FLYERS/POSTCARDS

I find postcards to be a more tangible promotional item instead of paper flyers. Although flyers are cheaper, I find they are more often thrown away and discarded. I find myself holding onto postcards more often. If you already have postcards printed to promote your album, no worries, you don't have to print different ones just for the confer-

ence. You can use white labels to print your showcase details and stick them onto your postcards.

**Tip: Bring plenty of blank white labels and a fine-tip marker or pen.**

It's not unheard of that showcase times change, so be ready to hand-write updated showcase times on new labels that you can do as you hand-out the postcards to people.

### **POSTERS:**

Many conferences are cracking down on poster-ing, with good reason. It tends to make the conference look like a mess, and isn't exactly the most environmentally friendly activity. So find out before going to the conference what the poster-ing policy is. The conference might have only a select few designated areas to put up posters, so you won't need to go out and print 100 posters. A few dozen will likely do the trick.

### **CDS, EPS, DOWNLOAD CARDS, ETC.**

What will you give to people so that they can hear your music after the conference? A copy of your latest CD? A special EP? A digital download card with your full album? A digital download card with just a 1 or 2 songs?

This is enough to make your head spin. Here's the thing: there's really no wrong answer, just as long as you have something tangible that you can give to people to take home with them.

This also ties into what your goals are. If you're looking to get booked into festivals or find a booking agent, maybe a special EP is the way to go. You could put your best 3 songs, plus 2 live tracks to give the booker an idea of what your live performance is like. Giving a booker an entire album isn't always necessary. The reality is that if they do listen to your CD, they'll likely only listen to a few tracks and make a decision from there. And if they want more, they'll either ask you, or in your follow-up with them you can offer to send a full-length album.

If you're looking to meet journalists who can review your album, then obviously having some copies of your full-length album with you is a good idea. Sometimes artists will do album exchanges for network-ing purposes or gig swapping possibilities, so this is another reason to have some albums on hand.

As for digital download cards, I personally like them. They're cheaper, people can put them in their wallets, and it can act as a business card. And if you have a hole punched in the top, people can even hang them on their conference lanyards. I tend to keep more download cards at the end of a conference than CDs, as I'm really not a CD person anymore. At almost every conference I go to, I end up leaving a pile of CDs in the hotel lobby because I simply don't have room to stuff them all in my suitcase. Often times they were from artists who were looking for something that I simply couldn't provide, but insisted on giving me a CD anyway, even though there was no real connection made.

## Always get a business card

Always get a business card in return for the promo item you gave out so that you can be sure to follow-up with that person. Also note anything interesting about the conversation on the card so that you will have something to trigger your memory about meeting that person.

## Elevator Pitch Resources:

Ariel Hyatt of Ariel Publicity ([arielpublicity.com](http://arielpublicity.com)) is a great source to learn about developing your elevator pitch.

Here's a blog post by Ariel about creating your elevator pitch: [bandzoogle.com/blog/blog-posts/creating-a-perfect-pitch--laser-focus-your-message-19981.cfm](http://bandzoogle.com/blog/blog-posts/creating-a-perfect-pitch--laser-focus-your-message-19981.cfm)

And here's a video with Ariel and Derek Sivers (formerly of CD Baby) about pitches: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fbVbK8Ou3s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fbVbK8Ou3s)

"Come prepared with a set number of promo albums, but not an open box. Decide you'll give away 25 copies or 50 copies, for example."

– [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

So whatever you decide, don't bring 500 copies of your CD/EP/Download card and just blindly give them away to anyone and everyone. Bring a set amount and be more targeted in who you give them to.

### HAVE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH READY

While at a music conference you're going to have a lot of quick conversations that are no doubt going to be cut-short/interrupted. While in the elevator, in the hotel lobby, just before a showcase begins, in between workshops, etc. Although you're going to focus on the other person (we'll get into that a bit later), you'll want to be ready to describe your music in a concise, engaging and interesting way when that person asks you.

This is exactly what an elevator pitch is. It's the sentence you'll say when you're in an elevator and have just 30 seconds to make that other person interested in what you do.

And please, whatever you do, don't say that you sound like nothing anyone has ever heard before. That doesn't tell the person anything about your music, and they will forget about you the moment they leave the elevator. The purpose of the pitch is to be memorable. Give the person a good idea of who you are as an artist and what you sound like in an interesting and unique way so that they'll then go out of their way to check out your showcase.

### OK, HERE'S A FINAL CHECKLIST TO BE SURE THAT YOU ARE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE CONFERENCE:

- Confirm showcase(s)
- Confirm conference registration
- Set specific goals
- Create Schedule
- Create Budget
- Book Travel & Accommodations
- Prepare Promo materials
- Finalize Elevator Pitch

**NOW, IT'S OFF TO THE CONFERENCE...**



# 2

## DURING THE CONFERENCE

Finished checking your Facebook and Twitter and ready to read some more? Excellent :)

Once you arrive at the conference, you'll check into the hotel and start getting to know your way around. **A few things to do right away:**

### Always Be Polite to Staff

Even if you've just driven 14 hours in an over-stuffed car to get there, always be extremely polite to the conference staff. Say hello, big smile, say thank you, etc. Most people working at the conference are volunteers and are working long hours for the love of making the conference a success. Show them the same courtesy as you would show the conference director, or that booking agent you want to meet.

- Ask at the hotel desk about the nearest grocery store
- Go to the conference registration desk
- Feel free to ask any questions you might have right away, for example, where the designated poster areas are.
- Take out the conference program and get acquainted with the layout of the conference. Find rooms and areas that you plan on visiting during the conference so that you can find them more easily when you might be in a rush to get somewhere.
- If you have posters to put up, find all of the designated areas to hang posters and put up 1 poster per designated area. Not 10. Although tempting, especially if you're at the conference early, there is limited space and more showcases than there is room to poster for them all. A sure way to get attention in a negative way is to go around taking up all of the poster area with your own posters. And chances are, they will ALL be taken down in a matter of hours anyway, so it will be a waste of time and money.
- Go to that grocery store to buy some snacks and food.
- Once you drop off your supplies in your hotel room, if you still have some time to spare before any conference activities, go to the hotel lobby bar/restaurant. You don't have to order an expensive meal or drinks; you can simply have a coffee or tea and start socializing right away. The hotel lobby bar can be the center of activity during a conference, and you'll meet lots of people there, guaranteed.

And speaking of which, it's time to talk about networking...

### 2.1 NETWORKING: IT'S ALL ABOUT THEM

"Understand that you're there to listen more than to be heard."

– David Newland (Editor-in-Chief, [Roots Music Canada](#))



“Be actually interested in the people you talk to. Nothing will set you apart more quickly than that.”

– Fran Snyder

(Founder, [ConcertsInYourHome.com](http://ConcertsInYourHome.com) & [ListeningRoomNetwork.com](http://ListeningRoomNetwork.com))

“Network, network, NETWORK! That is the name of the game. It’s about meeting people who can help you and your music career. But don’t always make it about you. Take an interest in the person you are speaking to. If you’re smart, you’ve already done your homework and know a little bit about them. This will allow you to have an intelligent conversation so you don’t come off like 99% of the others guys there, shoving a CD into their hand hoping they take the time to listen.”

– Madalyn Sklar (Founder, [GoGirlsMusic.com](http://GoGirlsMusic.com))

Derek Sivers (formerly of CD Baby) calls it “[The Tao of promotion](#)”. Essentially, you’re going to spend most of your time talking to people about what THEY do. The overwhelming majority of people (not just artists) don’t take a step back and genuinely try to get to know the person they’re talking to. This will make you stand out in a BIG way.

And trust me, once you sincerely engage someone in a conversation about what they do, they are far more likely to be interested in what YOU do. But the key is to be sincere. Don’t just let the person talk while the whole time you’re thinking about how exactly you’re going to promote yourself once they’re finished talking. Most people can see through this. Ask the person questions, dig deeper, think about how you can help that person in some way.

“Everyone is someone. There is no one who isn’t worthy of meeting at these events and sometimes the impact of one quiet house concert promoter liking you and your music can mean a huge array of opportunities.”

– [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

Here are some ideas for questions you can ask a total stranger at a music conference:

- 1 What's their name? (And **remember it**. To help you remember, use their name a few times during the conversation.)
- 2 Where are they from?
- 3 What do they do?
- 4 How did they start in that job?
- 5 How did they start out in the music business?
- 6 Why do they work in the music industry?
- 7 Who are their favourite artists? (Tip: if you sound anything at all like an artist they named, use it later when they ask about you)
- 8 What are they doing at the conference?
- 9 Have they seen any good showcases? Any good panels?
- 10 Is it their first time at this conference?
- 11 If they've been at the conference before, can they recommend any good restaurants in the area or places that are a must-see in the city?

And so on. You get the idea. Ask about THEM and keep them talking about their experience, their opinions, and follow-up with questions that show you were paying attention.

"Always have pen and paper with you - you will be meeting a lot of people. Having pen and paper will ensure you don't miss out on getting valuable contact info so you can connect after the conference."

– Madalyn Sklar (Founder, [GoGirlsMusic.com](http://GoGirlsMusic.com))

And always be sure to have a pen and paper to take notes about your conversations, this will be very important later when you follow-up. Often times the conference tote bag will have at least 1 pen, but if not, and if you forgot to pack one, your hotel room probably has a few pens on the desk.

**But what about me?** Well, if you've spent a good amount of time talking about the other person, at a certain point they will almost always ask what you do. Now is your opportunity to make an impression. Remember that elevator pitch you worked on before the conference? Use it. Say only a few sentences, and if you're playing a showcase at the conference, mention the time and place, but then as [Derek Sivers](#) recommends:

"SHUT UP after 3 sentences. Please. Stop there. Don't pull out your CD. Don't hand them a flyer. Wait for them to ask or change the subject back to them if they don't!"

I experienced this first hand at the OCFE conference in 2010. While at a networking cocktail with my good friend Carl Comeau of Hyperbole Music ([Montreal Folk Festival](#), [Dunham Wine and Folk Festival](#)), we were approached by an artist named Jill Zmud. Except we didn't know she was an artist. She just walked right up to us, which can be a scary thing for most people to do (going up to total strangers to talk to them, not approaching Carl and I, we're very nice people!). She told us her name and asked what we did. Of course, Carl and I were more than happy to talk about ourselves at length, especially after we had just had a few complimentary beers. But after about 5 minutes of blabbing on about ourselves, we realized that we knew nothing about the person we were talking to.

So we asked what Jill did. Turns out Jill is an artist and she was at the conference as an alternate showcase artist. Jill explained that it essentially meant if an official showcase artist got really sick or broke their leg while at the conference, Jill would get to showcase, but of course, chances were slim. She made us laugh with how she described it, and we then asked if she had any unofficial showcases at the conference, and it turns out she did, and she told us when they were. But she didn't shove a flyer in our face and only gave us one when we asked if we could please have one.

Needless to say, Jill made an impression on me and I started following her on Twitter right away: [twitter.com/jillzmud](https://twitter.com/jillzmud)

“Don't get caught up in isolating yourself with friends you already know. Force yourself to break out of your comfort zone and meet new people.”

– [Jay Aymar](#) (Artist)

And one last thing to keep in mind about networking: don't just talk to people who you already know. Attending a music conference is expensive. Make the most of it by breaking out of your comfort zone and meet new people. If you don't, chances are you'll look back and regret it.



Before moving on, I highly recommend you read the blog post that Derek Sivers wrote about attending music conferences. It goes more in-depth about the "Tao of Promotion": [www.sivers.org/conferences](http://www.sivers.org/conferences)

Now it's time to take a look at some of the activities during the conference that you'll be participating in and attending.

## 2.2 PANELS & WORKSHOPS

“Attend the workshops, even the ones you think you’d learn nothing from. If you’ve never been a conference, you’ll be surprised at what gets discussed in these open forums. Sometimes it goes directions that you’d never imagine and inspiration pours out of those rooms.”

– [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

Panel discussions and workshops are my favourite part of music conferences. They’re not only an opportunity to learn, but a great place to network and meet people. And chances are, a lot of the people who you want to meet will be at these panels, so take advantage and attend as many as you can. This might mean partying less and going to bed earlier so you can wake up clear headed and ready to network at 9AM, but trust me, it will be worth it.

“Where are the presenters and other political heavyweights? They’re actually out of bed and doing things in conference rooms and trade show booths in the mornings and early afternoons.”

– Andy Frank (Executive Producer, [Roots Music Canada](#))

“Stay sober and attend the panels during the day. Stay up until a reasonable hour and meet your peers and play music together but approach the conference professionally.”

– [Jay Aymar](#) (Artist)

When attending panels, you can stand out by taking an active interest in the discussion and asking questions. But whatever you do, don’t try to sell yourself while doing this. Say your name, mention that you’re an artist, maybe where you’re from, but then ask your question. And please keep the question short. Inevitably every panel has a person that rambles on for a few minutes (usually full of shameless self-promotion) while “asking a question”. Please don’t be that person. Please.

If there is someone on the panel who you want to meet, ask the question specifically to them. This will make for a great excuse to talk to them after the panel, to either thank them for their answer or to continue the discussion. Then use the “Tao of Promotion” and start building the relationship.

## 2.3 TRADE SHOW

Another great place to meet people and network is at the trade show. For some conferences, the trade show is only open on specific days, for others it is open for the duration of the conference. Be sure to schedule some time to do a thorough walk through of the trade show. And if you've done your homework, you'll know exactly which booths you'll be targeting.

But you should also go around talking to people at other booths as well, because you never know who you'll meet. Same networking rules apply, ask people about what they or their company does and take it from there. The trade show can be a great place to round up people to come see your showcase if you go about it in the right way.

## 2.4 SHOWCASES

OK, now onto what is arguably the most important element of a music conference: showcases.

"In my first year, my publicist suggested I attend the conference to simply watch and learn. I didn't showcase at all and it was great advice."

– [Jay Aymar](#) (Artist)

If you don't have any showcases, that's totally fine. In fact, it can be a good thing. Sometimes taking that first year to simply watch and learn from other artists will give you the insight you need to make your conference showcase(s) a success when they do happen. It can also help you avoid some of the pitfalls and mistakes that many first timers make.

So if you don't have a showcase, then your job is to simply attend as many showcases by other artists as possible. Support artists that you already know, but also go see showcases by artists that you don't know but want to work with.

Now if you are showcasing at the conference, here are a few quick tips to start off with:

### 1. Always arrive early

Never make the organizers wonder where you are. Show up early and be ready to sound check as soon as they are ready for you. Take the time to mentally prepare for your showcase or simply watch the artist who is showcasing before you.

### 2. Don't just leave right after your showcase

Once you've finished performing, be sure to stick around afterwards for 2 reasons:

- **To talk to people who were at your showcase**

It's very important to not be a rock star and disappear right after your showcase. Take the time to greet people, thank them for being at your showcase, ask them what they thought, get feedback, etc. This is your time to shine and really make solid connections, because now those people have seen you perform. This is why you are showcasing, to meet people who can help your career, so don't run off afterwards and make them find you somewhere else. Chances are they'll find another artist first.

- **Out of respect for the showcase organizers and the artist showcasing right after you**

Hopefully you haven't scheduled several showcases back-to-back. This can be seen as very disrespectful to the showcase organizers, as well as the artist who is showcasing after you. Be supportive of both your fellow showcase artists and the showcase organizer/host by sticking around. This gesture will go a long way in solidifying relationships with both.

## PROMOTING YOUR SHOWCASE

If you're showcasing at the conference, the best promotion you can do is to attend as many workshops and panels as possible, spend time at the tradeshow, as well as hang out in the hotel bar/restaurant meeting people. If you're making quality connections, chances are good that at least some of these people will pass by your showcase.

But you also have to take care of the basics, like having your showcase listed on your website and social media sites, and making sure to have posters and flyers up in the designated areas. You might have to continually check-up on your posters to make sure that they haven't fallen down or been covered up, which tends to happen. So make sure you've printed enough posters to replenish when needed.

"I think it's really important to support our fellow artists at these events, as well. Doing a modest schedule and planning to go and see your friends to cheer them on is probably the most effective pace for a conference. It's about community, after all. We need camaraderie."

—Ember Swift (Artist)

Another great way to get people out to your showcase is by attending other artists' showcases. By showing support for your fellow artists, many will reciprocate and attend your showcase. It's just natural to want to support the people who have supported you, and if you're the one making that first step more often, then chances are you'll have a room full of your peers.

## SHOWCASE PERFORMANCE

Here are some tips for the performance aspect of your showcase:

### TIME YOUR SET

"For timed showcases, work up at least one short option - about one minute and a half in length. It'll come in handy so often - NEVER go over your allotted time."

- Fran Snyder

(Founder, [ConcertsInYourHome.com](http://ConcertsInYourHome.com) & [ListeningRoomNetwork.com](http://ListeningRoomNetwork.com))

"With a solid list of songs and having really understood their length including intros, I know that I won't go overtime and so I don't need to stress about time constraints or being cut off."

- [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

Often artists will save their best song for last, only to be cut off because they've gone over their allotted time. It's heartbreaking to watch, but it can easily be avoided. Before even reaching the conference make sure you have rehearsed your set, including time for introductions, witty banter, etc. Always leave a little wiggle room in your set for the unexpected: extra applause at the end of a song, banter back and forth with an audience member, etc.

### REPEAT YOUR NAME

"Repeat your name 100 times during the set. Most people will have no idea who you are so make sure they don't forget."

- Panos Panay (Founder, [Sonicbids](http://Sonicbids))

People are constantly coming in and out of showcases, so please don't forget to say your name often. If you only said your name at the very

beginning of your set, the people who arrived 3 songs in will have no idea who you are. Don't be shy about it, and you can even joke about constantly repeating it, just make sure to do it. I've attended more than a few artist showcases and walked out not knowing who the artist was.

### PLAY ONLY YOUR BEST (REHEARSED) SONGS

"If you're not rehearsed or you're not sure about a new song, don't play it."

– [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

It might be tempting to play that song you just wrote because it feels fresh and exciting, and you think it's the best song you've ever written. But **if you haven't played the song live before, PLEASE don't play it at your showcase.** Play the songs you know best, play older "hits", but whatever you do, don't go in there playing a song live for the first time.

An artist friend of mine once played a high-profile showcase at a music conference and decided to play not only one, but several new songs that had never been performed live. Big mistake. Everyone I was with commented that those songs were the weakest part of the set and couldn't understand why the artist had played them. You have to remember that the people in attendance are generally not having a beer and chatting with their friends like at a bar/club. They are there to do business. These are people who can book you and help your career. Don't take risks like playing songs you've never played live before. Only play what you know best and what has been rehearsed many, many times. Maybe try out that new song in the late night jam sessions amongst other musicians and ask for their feedback. But please don't showcase with it.

### PLAY YOUR HEART OUT, NO MATTER WHAT

"A highly touted artist I generally respect was "conferenced-out" and said so before his sets. He played like he couldn't give two shits. One time he played in front of only two people, who happened to be presenters. It was an opportunity of a lifetime. Instead, they left after two songs and told dozens of people how crap the artist was. If you're not up for playing, don't play, don't wreck your brand!"

– Andy Frank (Executive Producer, [Roots Music Canada](#))



And it goes without saying, regardless of how many or how few people are at your showcase, play like you're playing in front of all of the agents, managers and artistic directors you were hoping to meet. Because you never know who those few people are, and often times it will surprise you.

At a Folk Alliance conference a few years ago, I went to see a private showcase of one my Montreal artist friends, [Allison Lickley](#). It was in a small hotel room, and there were only a handful of people. I kind of felt bad for Allison initially, but then I realized that one of the people sitting up front was Ken Irwin, co-founder of Rounder Records. Most artists would have killed to have Ken at their showcase, and there he was in a tiny hotel room watching my friend Allison perform with only a few other people in the room. And this kind of thing happens more often than you might think.

## 2.5 SOCIAL MEDIA

### Don't send all of your tweets to Facebook

If you've connected your Facebook and Twitter profiles to update them at the same time, just be sure not to send every tweet to your Facebook page. Use selective tweets or disconnect your profiles while you're at the conference. If you're tweeting several times every hour about a workshop or showcase, your Facebook friends might get annoyed as they have no context for what's going on. I made this mistake once and lost a few of my contacts on Facebook, so I speak from experience!

One way to enhance your conference experience is through Social Media. On the conference's Facebook page you can often find updated information and discussion about activities at the conference, so it's another chance to network and meet people by joining the discussion.

With Twitter, conferences will have a specific hashtag # so that everyone tweeting about the conference can search the hashtag and find out what everyone else is saying. You can use this to:

- Promote your showcase
- Promote other artists' showcases
- Tweet good quotes from workshops and panel discussions (sometimes you can even tweet questions to the moderator if a specific hashtag for that panel discussion has been set up)
- Talk about how great it was to meet someone (and if they're on Twitter, mention them using @)
- Tweet if there is good food at certain showcase rooms (I once helped someone find jujubes at an OCFF conference. They were craving jujubes, I had just left a hotel room stocked with them, so I tweeted back with the room number)
- Find out quick info about the conference
- Find out where people you want to meet are hanging out (a little stalker-ish, but if you haven't had a chance to meet that person and they tweet about being at a certain showcase or panel, by all means, go see if you can meet them)

## Further Social Media Resources:

[www.socialnetworksforsocialmusicians.com](http://www.socialnetworksforsocialmusicians.com)

Madalyn Sklar runs a website called "Social Networks for Musicians". She offers various services and a free Facebook eCourse which are worth checking out.

## Book Recommendation:



If you're looking to learn about how to use Facebook and Twitter more effectively, I highly recommend the new

book by Ariel Hyatt and Carla Lynne Hall: "**Musicians Roadmap to Facebook and Twitter**":

[www.arielpublicity.com/musiciansroadmap/](http://www.arielpublicity.com/musiciansroadmap/)

"The best way to enhance your conference experience is to utilize Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, ReverbNation and LinkedIn. I recommend using these sites to research the conference and attendees (both industry and other bands). It's amazing how many industry people are easy to communicate with directly through Twitter and LinkedIn. They're both very popular in business. Be sure to post periodically on the conference's Facebook wall in addition to your own wall. Set up an Event on Facebook and Myspace. When you find bands playing the conference that might be good for gigswaps, check out their ReverbNation site, become a fan and post a comment. I always say it's best to cover all your bases because you never know how people will find you. For some it will be through Myspace while others will be Facebook or Twitter. Take the time to do it all."

– Madalyn Sklar (Founder, [SocialNetworksforsocialmusicians.com](http://www.socialnetworksforsocialmusicians.com))

## SOME FINAL CONFERENCE TIPS:

- Remember to keep ALL of your receipts. Every time you spend money, get a receipt and put it in that envelope you brought with you.
- Try to go outside for a walk to get some fresh air on a regular basis. It can get stuffy being cooped up in the hotel for 3-4 days straight and you'd be amazed how revitalizing it can be to get some fresh air.
- Drink lots of water. Instead of soft drinks or even juice, try as often as possible to hydrate with water.

"Don't drink too much and plan to get some rest. Take a nap when you can if there's a slight break in your schedule. If you burn out by Saturday morning, you're no good to anyone and least of all to yourself as a performer!"

– [Ember Swift](#) (Artist)

- If you're going to drink alcohol, do it in moderation, but then double the amount of water you drink.
- Get plenty of rest. Take naps when you can, and go to bed at a reasonable hour.
- And again, be extremely polite with staff and volunteers at the conference. Be patient, and always say please and thank you. They work VERY hard to make these conferences a success, so a congratulations or an extra thank you never hurts either!

Once the conference is done, it's time to head home and start taking the next steps towards advancing your career.

# 3

## AFTER THE CONFERENCE

OK, so you've survived your first music conference in one piece, congrats! But it's not time to relax just yet. What you do after the conference can be just as (if not more) important than what you did during the conference. It's in following up with the people you met at the conference where relationships will really start to take hold and opportunities for your career will develop.

### 3.1 THE FOLLOW-UP

Derek Sivers said it best on his blog post about [conferences](#):

"After 15 years of 100-or-so conferences, I can tell you from experience that only about 1% of the people ever follow up. Therefore, 99% of them wasted their time. Please don't be in that 99%. It's ALL about the follow-up. It's ONLY about the follow-up. Remember this, and you'll do well."

So once you're back home, take a few minutes to do the following:

#### 1. Organize & Sort

Clear some space on a table and start sorting out all of your business cards, notes, postcards, pieces of paper, etc.

#### 2. Data Entry

Enter all of the information into some kind of database/spreadsheet/Google doc, etc. I use Outlook for my contacts database, but it can be a simple Excel spreadsheet. For every new person I meet, I enter all the contact information I have for them. I then type some notes about conversations I had with that person, interesting facts about them, their interests, etc.

#### 3. Create Priority list

Once you've entered all of your new contacts into a place where you can reference them, create a priority list of who you're going to contact. Write down some notes for each person so you know exactly why you're contacting them, and what you'll be referencing to remind them of your conversation at the conference.

#### 4. Follow-up!

Once you've created your list, it's time to follow-up!  
A few considerations:

## HOW LONG SHOULD YOU WAIT TO FOLLOW-UP?

“Follow-up - this is so important because not much will happen if you don't take the time to follow-up AFTER the conference. It's best to do this within a week.”

– Madalyn Sklar (Founder, [GoGirlsMusic.com](http://GoGirlsMusic.com))

In terms of how long to wait before following up, this can vary greatly depending on who you talk to. Some people follow-up while they're still at the conference, others wait until 1-2 weeks after the conference when things have settled down. I don't think there is a right or wrong answer, and it can really be a case-by-case basis.

For example, if you've made a really strong connection with someone, and you feel like you are both excited to continue the dialogue, you can follow-up right away. If it's not someone on your priority list and you didn't have a strong connection, it can probably wait until a few weeks after the conference.

I know that I'm always impressed when an artist follows-up with me right away. First of all, it's rare to get a follow-up to begin with, but also, it just feels kind of good that the other person made it a priority to reach out to you right away.

So I will generally follow-up with people as soon as possible, especially while the conversations from the conference are still fresh in my mind. It's usually a short e-mail with 3 components:

- a Expressing that it was nice to meet them at the conference
- b A reference to something personal that we discussed to let them know that I was really paying attention (“I'll definitely check out that wine that you recommended”, or “Good luck to your wife with getting her pilot's license”, etc.)
- c And if there is a possibility of doing business, a request to have further discussion by phone in the near future.

## HOW SHOULD YOU FOLLOW-UP? PHONE? E-MAIL? SOCIAL MEDIA?

Now as for whether to use phone, e-mail or social media to follow-up, that's also a bit of a judgement call. The majority of the time I use e-mail. E-mail is a nice way to touch base and let the person respond when they have time, and you can catch them on the phone when an appointment has been set.

With phone calls, unless it was agreed to before, I generally won't call the person as the first follow-up. However, there are definitely people out there who are really good on the phone, so if you're one of them, you can try to follow-up by phone as a first step.

## Bonus Tip: Keeping in Touch

Once you've followed-up with the person and a positive connection has been made, feel free to keep in touch with them. Let's say they are passionate about wine. If you try a wine that is particularly good, send them a quick note making the recommendation. Don't do this every week of course, but maybe once or twice during the year would be a nice way to keep that connection going.

And if you plan on going back to the same conference the following year, about a month before follow-up with all of the contacts you made the previous year and ask if they will be attending again. This time you can ask if they want to meet up for a drink, or maybe a bite to eat while you're both there.

Last, but certainly not least, is how and when to use social media when following up:

### TWITTER

The nice thing about Twitter is that it's limiting by design, and meant for short interactions. Twitter can be used during the conference, and I have on several occasions started to follow someone on Twitter while the conference is still going on. And since Twitter is still a bit of a mystery for some people, if you do connect with someone there, chances are you'll impress them and have even more opportunities to interact with them by responding to their tweets.

### FACEBOOK

Facebook is a bit trickier. Many people use Facebook only to connect with their close friends and family. I will rarely try to add a person as a friend on Facebook right away. Unless it is obvious that they use Facebook for networking purposes and seem to accept all friend requests, I would avoid Facebook as an initial step in following up. But what you can do on Facebook is check if that person has a fan page for their company or festival and simply become a fan, a gesture that they will no doubt appreciate.

## 3.2 BACK TO YOUR BUDGET

One last thing you should do when you're back from the conference is take a look at the budget you prepared. Remember the envelope that you kept all of your receipts in? Take out the receipts and start sorting them out.

Once you've organized your receipts, take out the budget you created before going to the conference. Next to where you entered the amounts you budgeted in each category, add a column called "Actual Expense", then plug-in the amounts that you spent in each category.

How did you do? It's perfectly normal to go over budget by 10-15%. If you went over by more than that, try and evaluate where you spent the extra money and budget accordingly next time, or think of ways you can avoid incurring those expenses in the future.

Remember, if you didn't give away all of your CDs, only put an expense for the ones you gave away. So if the cost of each CD is \$2.50 and you gave away 65 out of 100, put \$162.50 as your final expense. Same goes for dropcards, as well as for posters and postcards, provided that they are re-usable for future events.

Download the sample music conference budget here:

[www.davecool.ca/2011/02/sample-music-conference-budget-for-musicians](http://www.davecool.ca/2011/02/sample-music-conference-budget-for-musicians)

Expense	Budgeted	Actual Expense
<b>Conference Fees</b>	\$350.00	\$350.00
<b>Showcase Fees</b>	\$75.00	\$75.00
<b>Marketing Materials</b>		
Posters	\$50.00	\$50.00
Postcards	\$100.00	\$100.00
CDs	\$250.00	\$162.50
Dropcards	\$100.00	\$64.00
<b>Travel</b>		
Flight	\$500.00	\$580.00
Baggage Fees	\$25.00	\$25.00
Taxis	\$30.00	\$36.00
<b>Hotel</b>	\$250.00	\$253.13
<b>Food</b>		
Groceries	\$40.00	\$44.32
Restaurants	\$50.00	\$57.50
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
	\$50.00	\$62.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1,870.00</b>	<b>\$1,859.45</b>

# 4

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

A few final things to keep in mind when attending a music conference:

### REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN

You're alive, you're breathing, and you're attending a music conference. Life is good. Don't let the little things get you down. Make the most of your time at the conference and remember to have fun.

### IT'S A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

"...you are making an investment in your career, not looking for gigs for one year."

– David Newland (Editor-in-Chief, [Roots Music Canada](#))

"It may be that your first showcase does not yield any bookings, a new booking agent, publicist, etc. For some conferences, it is a slow build. Meeting new people, building a community at the event and raising your profile takes time."

– Erin Barnhardt (Executive Director, [Folk Music Canada](#))

Chances are you won't get any bookings while at the conference. In fact, it might take a few years for it to happen. It takes time to build relationships and for opportunities to present themselves. But just meeting someone at a conference is a great first step. And hopefully the next time they see your application at their festival, they'll remember who you are and give you strong consideration. And if they still don't book you, be just as polite when you see them again. Don't ever burn your bridges.



## **SOCIAL MEDIA IS GREAT, MEETING PEOPLE IS EVEN BETTER**

The advent of social media has brought with it the incredible opportunity to easily network with people from around the world. However, I'm a big believer that relationships are solidified with face-to-face meetings, especially over a few drinks or a meal. This is where you'll create memories and develop strong bonds with people. Attending music conferences gives you this opportunity, so I hope you'll take advantage and choose to attend a few throughout your career. They can be a wonderful experience, and you might end up meeting people who not only help your career, but who become good friends for years to come.

## **THANK YOU.**

Well if you've made it this far into the book, thank you for taking the time to read it. The "Cool's Notes" eBook series is a project I've wanted to do for several years now, and this is just the first of many more eBooks to come. Thanks so much for being here for the first one, I hope you enjoyed it.

Cheers,



# FULL INTERVIEWS

I was fortunate to be able to interview some very smart people for this eBook. Thank you so much to everyone who took time out of their busy schedules to do interviews. I'm very grateful to have been able to include your insight in the book.

So that everyone can benefit fully from their collective expertise, here are the full, unedited interviews conducted for the book:

## JAY AYMAR (Artist, [jayaymar.com](http://jayaymar.com))

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### 1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?

Stay sober and attend the panels during the day. Stay up until a reasonable hour and meet your peers and play music together but approach the conference professionally.

### 2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?

Don't get caught up in isolating yourself with friends you already know. Force yourself to break out of your comfort zone and meet new people. At my first conference I didn't know a soul but soon figured out that if I didn't initiate conversation I'd likely be ignored (it's just human nature). Unfortunately, I did the rookie move of staying up too late, drinking too much and missing the panel discussions. Both sides of this equation are important, but it's wise to use moderation.

### 3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?

I'm the wrong guy to ask about that one. If you want to dress up like Lady Gaga then be my guest but I truly think your artistry will ultimately speak for itself.

### 4- Do you recommend that artists play as many showcases as possible while at a conference, or just stick to 1 or 2 "quality" showcases?

In my first year, my publicist suggested attend the conference to simply watch and learn. I didn't showcase at all and it was great advice. The following year I could afford four showcases and felt that was about right.

### 5- What do you do to make sure that you are prepared for a showcase? How do you cut out the noise and activity of the conference to make sure that you are "on"?

If you're a working musician you should naturally be prepared. As for shrapnel, I usually have a few postcards, stickers, and CD's at the ready.

As a solo guitar playing singer-songwriter the noise can definitely be a distraction. Here's what I did last year: Open the door - turn the lock on the door to the out position - let the door rest on the lock (partially closed to buffer noise). I then convinced an enthusiastic, beautiful hippie girl to flag people into my room in a very polite way. (She received a few CD's for her trouble.) Once the show started, it was quiet and a few trickled in as the showcase went on.

# ERIN BARNHARDT (Executive Director, Folk Music Canada)

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## 1 What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?

Attending your first big music conference can be totally overwhelming, exciting and inspiring. Setting up reasonable expectations and doing a lot of the work before you even get to the event will help make the experience more worthwhile and enjoyable. I would recommend:

- Lowering your expectations. It may be that your first showcase does not yield any bookings, a new booking agent, publicist, etc. For some conferences, it is a slow build. Meeting new people, building a community at the event and raising your profile takes time.
- Network with other musicians that make art that you love. Some of the most successful artists that I have observed at conferences book tours in new markets through new musician contacts. Stay up (but not at the expense of the daytime programming) and play music with peers. It may result in interesting tour possibilities and will help keep your spirits high at an industry event.
- Take advantage of the conference programming in the daytime. Attend workshops, mentoring sessions, receptions and all of the activities that are designed to enrich your conference experience and provide professional development. The schedule is available well in advance...don't be afraid to be a nerd, print out the schedule and highlight all of the sessions that you want to attend.
- Above all – work on your craft. The most important part of showcasing is being remarkable.

- Follow-up! Once you have those sought after business cards in your pocket, write a quick follow-up note with an update about what you are working on (if it is actually news).

## 2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?

A couple of things that artists should avoid are:

- Being aggressive with presenters. Be genuine! Seek out the opportunities (like mentoring sessions) that are designed to connect you with presenters, work on a concise and interesting pitch and invite them to your showcase. Don't pull them into a room or follow them around too much.
- There are so many showcases happening at once at most conferences. Be respectful of all of the other artists performing at the event. Avoid being too loud in hallways and playing outside of showcase rooms.

## 3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?

Be remarkable!

- Work on your craft and performance!
- Ask artists that are a bit farther along in their career path about how they work at conferences
- Go to the daytime programming – it's amazing how much organizers/presenters notice when artists take advantage of opportunities designed for them
- Be really creative with your promotional materials – use less paper and think of interesting ways (like a hand stamp!) to tell people about your showcases.

# ANDY FRANK (Executive Producer, Roots Music Canada)

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## 1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?

The first time, I would advise artists to absorb, go there to learn as much as possible about the scene, the politics: who are the players, where do they hang out, which showcase rooms really matter, who are the pretenders, who is getting buzz and why?

At the same time, remember, like it or not, you're a brand. Look at the brands others represent (i.e. themselves). What have they done to effectively draw attention to themselves (other than plastering elevators with posters)? If you, as an artist, leave the conference easily recognizing names of other artists you may never have actually seen or met over the weekend, chances are they did something right. You could do worse than taking notes of what it is they did.

## 2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?

Getting stupid-drunk and high and making fools of themselves up and down the corridors of the hotel. Hanging out with losers - artists are VERY often judged by the company they keep, and if your conference pals are a) crappy musicians going nowhere b) stupid partiers, you're just ruining your brand.

Just this past year at OCFF, a highly touted artist I generally respect was "conferenced-out" and said so before his sets. He played like he couldn't give two shits. One time he played in front of only two people, who happened to be presenters. It was an opportunity of a lifetime. Instead, they left after two songs and told dozens of people how crap the artist was. If you're not up for playing, don't play, don't wreck your brand!

## 3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?

Where are the presenters and other political heavyweights? They're actually out of bed and doing things in conference rooms and trade show booths in the mornings and early afternoons. More often than not, artists are still cutting zzzs, nursing hangovers, rehearsing for their showcases, or just hanging around outside smoking during those sessions. You can be different, you can attend as many boring conference room sessions, workshops, etc. as humanly possible, and be prepared to ask a few smart questions. Give a shit, and they may just give a shit about you. But it's up to you to demonstrate that behaviour first.

Also, no matter who you are and what kind of music you play, dress for success. Think really hard about what you'll wear from day to day and occasion to occasion. Do your brand that favour. Any booker/presenter/label/media want to know how THEIR brand will benefit from you being associated with it, and your personal presentation goes a long, long way toward making those kinds of decisions. If I'm booking a TV slot, I don't want the next 1971 Neil Young, because a) you're not Neil b) it's not 1971. Your brand is made largely by your wardrobe, the company you keep, your attitude, and once people get past that, your work. But the first three are the lures.

**4- Do you recommend that artists play as many showcases as possible while at a conference, or just stick to 1 or 2 “quality” showcases?**

This goes back to my previous answer about minding the company you keep. I know when I walk past certain showcase rooms that I can rattle off the mediocre lineup that is going to play by memory because they always seem to find each other. They hire their friends, or people who they know will chip in to the room, whatever the politics. It's unfortunate, but mediocrity finds company really easily because it's easy and lazy.

But if I, after only a few conferences, know that most rooms are a waste of time, then you should also find out quickly what the score is. Again, your brand is paramount. Ask around. Play where you stand a fair chance to be seen and heard by people who matter, and if you can't, then play with lineups that you respect, that are headed in the right direction, people with whom you share your professional values. Don't do discount. It hurts you. Less can be more. Ubiquity is not necessarily success, it can also smack of “throw enough shit against the wall” desperation.

And you can take that out of the conference with you too; just because the local café will let you pass a hat on Tuesday nights doesn't mean it's a good long term strategy for you. Why should your fans then pay \$20 to see you at an upscale venue when they can see you for free any Tuesday night?

### **1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?**

There are a number of things that are really important. One is to understand that you're there to listen more than to be heard. The second is that you are making an investment in your career, not looking for gigs for one year. And the third is that everything you do is marketing. You form your reputation on the basis of how you treat others and how you behave, not just on those brief moments you get to play.

### **2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?**

The most important thing to avoid is high expectations. You must keep your goals entirely realistic. Set out a list of maybe 3 things you are there to do, and achieve those. Don't set "goals" that are in the hands of others (like bookings). Those things come as a result of your achieving the things you set out to do. Don't let things you can't control take you away from where your focus should be.

### **3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?**

Obviously you can stand out very easily, in a negative way, by being a jackass. Talk all the time, plaster your posters everywhere, constantly pump your own stuff while ignoring others, get drunk or stoned or have a run-in with the hotel staff, ignore the showcase guidelines... you can cost yourself years of effort by doing that.

The better way is to do the opposite, by building relationships instead of trying to make a spotlight splash. Be polite. Listen. Take in showcases and panels to hear and be inspired by those you respect. Tell people where you're playing but don't be a salesperson. Keep it clean and sober.

### **4- Do you recommend that artists play as many showcases as possible while at a conference, or just stick to 1 or 2 "quality" showcases?**

It's okay to play lots of showcases; it's that much more chance that you be heard. But showcases are not the only thing a conference is about; there's a lot to learn from panels and workshops and if you treat the conference only as a meat market you may be demoralized by the end. Don't miss the chances to build your career.

And gauge the showcases on the basis of the host's commitment, their standing in the community, and their esthetic. A cheesy showcase can be a real downer, but an intimate song swap in a hotel room can have wonderful positive impact all around. You never know who is listening.

### 1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?

Don't run around trying to meet "industry" people. Instead, spend time getting to know the other artists that attend these events. These are the folks that have the most in-depth practical knowledge, these are the people that you can get gigs from (i.e. gig swapping), these are the insiders who can teach you something tangible about how to present yourself, network, etc. Check out the "hot" bands, get to know them, observe them. And, go to as many panels as you can and in general, drink from a fire hose. Spend less time worrying about marketing yourself and more time asking questions and connecting with people on a basic, social level.

### 2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?

Don't do the whole handing-out-your-CD-to-all-comers. If someone asks for it, great. If you ask them if they want it, most people will be too nice and too polite to say no. I hate to say it, but 99% of all CDs given at conferences stay in the hotel room trash bin. Don't waste your money. Instead, if you make a good connection, just follow up with someone later.

### 3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?

If you are performing, focus on two things: 1) market your show like a mad person (sorry but a simple listing in the conference program won't get you an audience); and 2) just focus on putting on a memorable show and blow people away. Oh, and repeat your name 100 times during the set. Most people will have no idea who you are so make sure they don't forget;

### 4- How can artists improve their Sonicbids EPK to stand out and be noticed by bookers of conference showcases?

Act like you care and show that you've taken the time to make it look good and professional. Make sure the EPK is complete, you have great photos (ideally a combination from both live shows and promo shots); your calendar is complete with both past and future dates; you link to great reviews; include a video of a live performance; be witty and clever with your elevator pitch and bio. And, if you have great social media stats or have won any awards, by all means MAKE IT STAND OUT.

## 1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?

I always tell first timers to do the following:

1. Research first - take the time to research the conference by going to their web site. Also visit their social network sites. Review the panels, see who is speaking, make a list of who you want to meet. Also check out similar artists/bands performing at the conference that you think would be a good fit for gig swaps.
2. Schedule - make a schedule so you don't miss out on panels and speakers that interest you. Also be sure to see the bands that you think would be good for gig swaps. Take the time to talk to these people. They can help you.
3. Go prepared - have lots of CDs, business cards, flyers for your show(s), postcards, posters, etc. Be armed and ready. I'm amazed how many don't go prepared.
4. Be prepared to network, then network some more! Network, network, NETWORK! That is the name of the game. It's about meeting people who can help you and your music career. But don't always make it about you. Take an interest in the person you are speaking to. If you're smart, you've already done your homework and know a little bit about them. This will allow you to have an intelligent conversation so you don't come off like 99% of the others guys there, shoving a CD into their hand hoping they take the time to listen. Because guess what, many won't! Most music industry people don't go to a conference to get overwhelmed with tons of CDs that they don't have room

for and don't have time to listen to. The better way to do this is to ask them how would they prefer to hear your music. Would they like a CD now or would they prefer you mail it or even email them your EPK. Ask and you'll have a much better chance of getting heard. Simple, I know!

5. Always have pen and paper with you - you will be meeting a lot of people. Having pen and paper will ensure you don't miss out on getting valuable contact info so you can connect after the conference.
6. Follow-up - this is so important because not much will happen if you don't take the time to follow-up AFTER the conference. It's best to do this within a week.

## 2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?

1. Avoid acting like you're on vacation - I've seen bands hanging out at the host hotel swimming pool rather than educating themselves in the panels and workshops.
2. Leave the bad attitude at home - have a positive attitude, get excited and enjoy the conference. Talk to as many people as you can. Make an impression. Be memorable.



### **3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?**

Be different. Be unique.

Years ago I attended a large music conference. A few weeks before I participated in a teleconference call put on by the conference along with other music industry people. We talked about making the most of a music conference. We had lots of musicians tuning into the call. The next day I get an email from a band who had tuned into the call. The first paragraph of the email was about how they got a lot out of the call and enjoyed hearing my advice. They wanted to know if I needed any help while at the conference. They even offered to be my “cabana boys” for the weekend. The second paragraph was much smaller, mentioning when and where they would be playing and they hoped I’d come see them play. They made the email about helping me, not about shoving their schedule in my face. They won me over by asking if there was anything they could do for me. I replied back saying I had enough volunteers coming along but that I really appreciated their offer. I also said I would definitely come see them play. When I arrived at the conference, they sought me out at the opening party. They introduced themselves and asked if there was anything I needed help with. They saw I had a stack of flyers and stickers in my hand and offered to pass them out for me. I was like, “wow”. This had never happened before. They helped me out with a few other things over the course of that weekend. It was sweet and sincere on their part. I stayed in touch with them for years, making myself available to them if they had questions or needed help. I meet countless people at music conferences. Most don’t stand out. Get creative. Think outside the box. Watch what others do and find a better way.

### **4- Do you recommend that artists play as many showcases as possible while at a conference, or just stick to 1 or 2 “quality” showcases?**

I think it’s better to play a few quality showcases so you are not overwhelmed and you can focus a good amount of time on networking and attending panels/workshops.

### **5- How can artists use social media to enhance their conference experience?**

The best way to enhance your conference experience is to utilize Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, ReverbNation and LinkedIn. I recommend using these sites to research the conference and attendees (both industry and other bands). It’s amazing how many industry people are easy to communicate with directly through Twitter and LinkedIn. They’re both very popular in business. Be sure to post periodically on the conference’s Facebook wall in addition to your own wall. Set up an Event on Facebook and Myspace. When you find bands playing the conference that might be good for gigswaps, check out their ReverbNation site, become a fan and post a comment. I always say it’s best to cover all your bases because you never know how people will find you. For some it will be through Myspace while others will be Facebook or Twitter. Take the time to do it all.

**1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?**

If you are showcasing, prepare. Know your best tunes cold so you can focus on the audience. For timed showcases, work up at least one short option - about one minute and a half in length. It'll come in handy so often - NEVER go over your allotted time. A solid verse/chorus, or verse/chorus/bridge can be great - heaven forbid you leave them wanting more, right?

**2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?**

Avoid ANYONE who is complaining. Conferences are exhausting enough without suffering these people. Once in a while, be aware that you ARE one of these people. And stop it right away.

**3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?**

Be actually interested in the people you talk to. Nothing will set you apart more quickly than that.

**4- Do you recommend that artists play as many showcases as possible while at a conference, or just stick to 1 or 2 "quality" showcases?**

Both are viable options, but one of them is exhausting and annoying.

## **1- What advice would you give to an artist attending a music conference for the first time?**

Come prepared with a set number of promo albums, but not an open box. Decide you'll give away 25 copies or 50 copies, for example. Keep track of who you're giving them to. You'll want to follow-up with those you passed them out to. All you need is to write on the backs of business cards or keep a small note pad in your pocket and then transfer the data later, but this step will save a lot of headaches. Have some sort of business card or flyer that will help people remember you. Not everyone can afford to give away CDs, but you can give a glimpse of who you are in your promotional material. People at these conferences meet too many artists all at once, so sometimes interesting promotional materials are the only thing that helps them associate your name with the memory of your face and the sound of your songs.

Be supportive and friendly. Everyone is someone. There is no one who isn't worthy of meeting at these events and sometimes the impact of one quiet house concert promoter liking you and your music can mean a huge array of opportunities.

Get to know other artists. It's not a competition; it's a community. This is your chance to make alliances and build networks that can include gig swapping and contact sharing across lots of different touring networks. It's always an amazing opportunity to make friends with people who live a life that is very similar to yours. I've even heard of a few conference romances!

Attend the workshops, even the ones you think you'd learn nothing from. If you've never been a conference, you'll be surprised at what gets discussed in these

open forums. Sometimes it goes directions that you'd never imagine and inspiration pours out of those rooms.

Finally, don't drink too much and plan to get some rest. Take a nap when you can if there's a slight break in your schedule. If you burn out by Saturday morning, you're no good to anyone and least of all to yourself as a performer!

## **2- What should artists avoid when attending a music conference?**

Avoid pushing yourself on others as though you're cold-calling. Giving CDs to random figures in the industry who haven't heard of you or expressed an interest is like throwing money in the air in a crowded airport. It's not worth it. What's more, it suggests desperation.

I've also mentioned it above, but partying too hard is definitely worth avoiding!

## **3- How can an artist stand out from the hundreds of other artists at a music conference?**

There are a lot of creative ways to stand out. The most important way, though, is through excellent songs and a compelling stage presence. If you have that, you won't need any fancy promotion to stand out from the crowd and any of your contact information or promo materials will just be a bonus.

I knew a woman once whose promotional material included candy. After hours of listening to music, her promo packs were the most popular among the crowd because everyone was needing a sugar rush by midnight. There are creative ideas like this that help make you memorable, but as I have already mentioned, the most important key to making an impression is strong music.

If you're not rehearsed or you're not sure about a new song, don't play it.

**4- Do you recommend that artists play as many showcases as possible while at a conference, or just stick to 1 or 2 “quality” showcases?**

I have done both and recommend a middle ground. If you play too many showcases, you spend your time running between rooms without the ability to speak to anyone after your showcases, which is the key to making contacts. Besides that, you wear yourself out within the first evening and run the risk of losing your voice or being too physically weary the next day when you have to do it all again.

That being said, it’s hard to know what qualifies as a “quality” showcase. Sometimes the ones you didn’t expect to be packed are, and the ones you expected to be prominent opportunities turn out to be very quiet. Taking risks on ones you don’t think are as “prominent” is also a good plan. You just never know!

I think it’s really important to support our fellow artists at these events, as well. Doing a modest schedule and planning to go and see your friends to cheer them on is probably the most effective pace for a conference. It’s about community, after all. We need camaraderie.

**5- What do you do to make sure that you are prepared for a showcase? How do you cut out the noise and activity of the conference to make sure that you are “on”?**

I plan my strongest songs and I generally get others to help choose those songs! (I sometimes overly love my obscure songs and tend to not choose my “hits”!) With a solid list of songs and having really understood their length including intros, I know that I won’t go overtime and so I don’t need to stress about time constraints or being cut off.

Once that worry is over, I just step into the moment with as much of myself as possible, and that sometimes includes the self that’s been excited or moved by the conference! Being honest about who you are and where you’re at on stage is really important to the authenticity of your showcase.

Nevertheless, it is possible to embody your songs when you believe in them and you believe in yourself as a performer. Sing your heart out! Smile! I make a habit of taking a few extra breaths to flush out any nerves while making eye contact with the listeners before I even begin a song. It’s calming and it reminds me of what I’m doing and why.

Good luck!

# MUSIC CONFERENCE LISTING

Here is a list of music conferences from around the globe. I'm sure there are some conferences missing, so if you know of any that should be added to this list, please get in touch with me: [www.davecool.ca](http://www.davecool.ca)

<b>Americana Music Festival &amp; Conference</b>	<a href="http://www.americanamusic.org">www.americanamusic.org</a>
<b>ASCAP Expo</b>	<a href="http://www.ascap.com/eventsawards/events/expo">www.ascap.com/eventsawards/ events/expo</a>
<b>CMJ</b>	<a href="http://www.cmj.com">www.cmj.com</a>
<b>Canadian Music Week</b>	<a href="http://www.cmw.net">www.cmw.net</a>
<b>Dewey Beach Music Conference</b>	<a href="http://www.deweybeachfest.com/dbmc/">www.deweybeachfest.com/dbmc/</a>
<b>DIY Convention</b>	<a href="http://www.diyconvention.com">www.diyconvention.com</a>
<b>ECMA</b>	<a href="http://www.ecma.ca">www.ecma.ca</a>
<b>FARM (Folk Alliance Region Midwest)</b>	<a href="http://www.farmfolk.org">www.farmfolk.org</a>
<b>Far-West Region (Folk Alliance Region WEST)</b>	<a href="http://www.far-west.org">www.far-west.org</a>
<b>Folk Alliance</b>	<a href="http://www.folkalliance.org">www.folkalliance.org</a>
<b>Halifax Pop Explosion</b>	<a href="http://www.halifaxpopexplosion.com">www.halifaxpopexplosion.com</a>
<b>Kindiefest</b>	<a href="http://www.kindiefest.com">www.kindiefest.com</a>
<b>Midem</b>	<a href="http://www.midem.com">www.midem.com</a>
<b>Millennium Music Conference</b>	<a href="http://www.musicconference.net">www.musicconference.net</a>
<b>Musexpo Los Angeles</b>	<a href="http://www.musexpo.net">www.musexpo.net</a>
<b>NERFA (Northeast Regional Folk Alliance)</b>	<a href="http://www.nerfa.org">www.nerfa.org</a>
<b>New Music Seminar</b>	<a href="http://www.newmusicseminar.com">www.newmusicseminar.com</a>
<b>NXNE</b>	<a href="http://www.nxne.com">www.nxne.com</a>
<b>Ocff Conference</b>	<a href="http://www.ocff.ca">www.ocff.ca</a>
<b>Pop Montreal</b>	<a href="http://www.popmontreal.com">www.popmontreal.com</a>
<b>Popkomm</b>	<a href="http://www1.messe-berlin.de/vip8_1/&lt;br/&gt;website/Internet/Internet/www.&lt;br/&gt;popkomm/englisch/index.html">www1.messe-berlin.de/vip8_1/ website/Internet/Internet/www. popkomm/englisch/index.html</a>
<b>RIDEAU</b>	<a href="http://www.rideau-inc.qc.ca">www.rideau-inc.qc.ca</a>
<b>SERFA (Southeast Regional Folk Alliance)</b>	<a href="http://www.serfa.org">www.serfa.org</a>
<b>South Carolina Music Conference</b>	<a href="http://www.scmusicconference.com">www.scmusicconference.com</a>
<b>SWRFA (Southwest Regional Folk Alliance)</b>	<a href="http://www.swrfa.com">www.swrfa.com</a>
<b>SXSW</b>	<a href="http://www.sxsw.com">www.sxsw.com</a>
<b>WOMEX</b>	<a href="http://www.womex.com">www.womex.com</a>

## ABOUT DAVE



Dave Cool (and yes, that's his real name!) is perhaps best known for having directed and produced the documentary film "What is INDIE? A look into the World of Independent Musicians" which documented the experience of being an independent artist in the music industry. The film featured several leading experts in the music industry, including Derek Sivers (CD Baby) and Panos Panay (Sonicbids), as well as with 20 independent artists.

Currently, Dave is the Director of Member Services for the Canadian Independent Recording Artists' Association ([CIRAA](#)). Dave will help launch and oversee a national micro-grant program for independent Canadian artists, as well as oversee a mentorship program focused on providing artists with hands-on career advice.

Dave also co-wrote a guide for singer-songwriters called "Your Successful CD Release" with Peter Spellman, Director of Career Development at the Berklee College of Music.

He lives in Montreal, loves wine, and works hard to live up to his name.

Visit his website for more free resources for artists: [www.davecool.ca](http://www.davecool.ca)

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