

"The Record Business in the 21st Century: *Money, Success & Careers*"

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Most of us share the desire to work hard and be recognized. Success, however, is rarely handed to us. We must create it ourselves. And no one owes us a job. Once we get a job, it's up to us to find paths of conduct that are ethical, satisfying and that encourage growth and opportunity.

The record industry is undergoing dynamic change with advances in technology, a sales slump, mergers and acquisitions. While there is great opportunity in chaos, it is more important than ever that people aspiring to enter and succeed in this business be flexible, adaptable to changing conditions, and capable of marketing their services in a way that gives them better control over their careers and futures.

From my experience helping people secure employment in the record business - and helping employers find qualified employees - here are a few tips for those wishing to improve their chances for success.

YOUR ASSETS

In your job search, your greatest assets are you, your network, your mentors, a commitment to continued education, preparation and research.

You. You are your best asset. Market yourself. Your resume doesn't sell you nearly as well as you do, but it should reflect your uniqueness. Invest yourself the way you would invest your money. Select companies which produce music, products or services which you use and enjoy, and which you know others like too.

Your Network. Relationships are everything. Cultivate them. Surround yourself with winners, people who will support and encourage you as well as help you over the rough spots which we all inevitably endure. Create positive energy and you will attract positive energy in the form of people and opportunities. Cut loose negative people and situations. Read the trades. Help local bands promote their shows, get involved with local college radio station, retail record stores, etc. Find music that turns you on locally and team up with its makers. Attend industry events, shows and conventions.

Mentors. Get a mentor or two, a Personal Board of Directors to help guide you in your career. Applying a mentor's good advice to everyday and long-term strategic decision-making reduces errors. Following the example of others can also help spare you costly errors. Through the perspectives of successful executives, you will be exposed to the best ideas and lessons that

have been learned by others, ones you can use at all times. And if you listen, you'll be better off by not having to learn every lesson personally, especially the very expensive ones. And modeling success is always a smart move, something you should do throughout your life.

Education. Even long after you graduate, a key to success is a commitment to continued education, which is essential in helping to maintain your unique value. Learn to negotiate, learn a second language, learn the jobs of your co-workers and increase your value to your employer and to yourself.

Preparation and Research. Don't limit yourself to one area or position in your job search. Many new types of positions are evolving, especially in the new media, e-commerce and consulting areas. Keep current on news, subscribe to as many trade publications (and non-trade pubs) as you can. Be aware of industry movement, executive shifts and market trends. Target specific companies and individuals instead of sending general "Dear Sir or Madam" letters and research ruthlessly. SEC filings are available online for publicly held companies which contain a wealth of information including earnings, profits, chief executives, marketing objectives, long-term and short-term strategic plans, and much more. Knowledge is power, use it.

YOUR SKILLS

Along with assets go skills. Some useful skills are the ability to be a good conversationalist and to negotiate, to create a niche for yourself, to budget time and money, and to maintain a positive attitude.

Be A Good Conversationalist. Learn to listen to what others say, absorb and respond. You'd be surprised at what you hear when you listen, and how we enjoy fewer than six degrees of separation from people and opportunities. The key to being interesting is to be interested in others. Most folks love to talk about themselves, and asking many questions is an excellent ice-breaker. A genuine curiosity is helpful. Asking about hobbies, personal interests, favorite authors and artists are good conversation starters.

Create Your Own Niche. The best way to make it in the record business is to create a niche for yourself. Survey the marketplace, find something that other people aren't doing, develop an expertise in it and never be afraid to walk away from a deal. Growth areas today include digital asset management, international markets and customer service. Other skills always in demand are marketing and the ability to reach consumers.

Negotiate. You can always get a better deal, and not just where money is concerned. Negotiate for a better grade, a better job, more responsibilities, a truce with your spouse or mate, a better price on an item at a store. Negotiation is an essential skill, learn it before you need it.

Budget. Good money management skills give you more options. You'll be less likely to accept a position you don't want if you're not scraping by financially. You must be able to ride out the lean months and years so you can get to the fat ones. Many creative people especially focus so much time and energy on their craft that they do little or nothing to learn the basics and take care of business. This means earning enough, developing a dependable, cash-generating skill if necessary, saving religiously (monthly!), and avoiding overspending and consumer debt.

Your Attitude. Overcome your shyness and develop winning social skills. Smile, listen, ask questions, be quick to offer compliments and praise, be willing to help. Eliminate any sense of entitlement; no one owes you a job. Instead, be grateful for what you have. Gratitude is a key ingredient to a person's happiness and to success.

Live your life so that you will be able to look back without regret. Most regrets people have are due more to acts of omission than to acts of commission. So take risks, especially when you're young, chase your dream and have a Plan B if it doesn't work out.

Finally, respect isn't given, it is earned. To gain the respect of others, you must first respect yourself, behave responsibly and fulfill your commitments. Don't flake out. People will begin to trust and rely upon you when you demonstrate consistent behavior over a period of time.

YOUR TOOLS

Tools you'll need in your job search include a master resume, a standard one-page resume, a cover letter, business cards and a database.

Master Resume. Prepare a Master Resume, an essential tool to which you should always be adding. It can be many pages long and should detail every job you've ever had, even those not related to the record business. Specifically, include anything you've ever done to benefit an employer, such as developing a simple accounting procedure to save your company money or organizing a departmental picnic. This document will enable you to cherry-pick appropriate experience every time you send out a standard, one-page resume.

Standard Resume (email me at tess@lamn.com for my Resume Tips, too long to include here). Don't be lazy and send the same resume out again and again. Every opportunity and job opening is different - market yourself directly to that position by researching the company and position, and adapt your resume and cover letter to each specific position using language from the job description. Check grammar and spelling, keep it to one page. Edit ruthlessly.

Cover Letter. Your cover letter should be tailored to the specific position for which you apply. Email me for a copy of the best cover letter ever written (tess@lamn.com).

Business Cards. Have simple, tasteful business cards printed with your name, telephone number and email address. Use a P.O. Box if your current living situation is subject to change. Make sure this information is always current.

Database. Create one that works for you to record, update and manage contact information for the many people you will meet in your travels. You need to be able to quickly access contact information.

Lastly, if you make an error – and we all do – analyze the situation, understand what went wrong and how you can fix (or avoid) it next time. Then move on. Learning from your mistakes will contribute to your wisdom. We must fail first to succeed.

About the author:

Tess Taylor is President of the National Association of Record Industry Professionals (www.NARIP.com), the biggest music business network in the world. One of the nation's leading authorities on careers in the music and record industries, Ms. Taylor has been called The Job Whisperer and has connected countless people to jobs and opportunities through her work in the US and abroad, cultivated collaborations for over two decades, helped launch hundreds of projects and several companies. If you've read Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling book "The Tipping Point" then you may recognize her as a "super-connector." She is creator of NARIP's Music Supervisor Sessions which have yielded over 70 music placements for participants and sold out in LA, New York, San Francisco, Berlin, Paris and London. Ms. Taylor is also President of the LA Music Network and was instrumental in launching the Mowglis, a pop band now on a major US tour (2013). Selected to perform at the 2011 LAMN Jam Music Contest, the Mowglis won the grand prize and talent judge Antony Bland signed them to management. They got a talent agent, signed with Universal/Photo Finish Records, have been featured on primetime network TV and are now getting radio airplay on primary market stations in the US. She is also a classically trained pianist, loves fine fountain pens, dogs and traveling the world. @TessTaylor, www.NARIP.com