



## **Make Your Music Portfolio A Memorable Song!**

### **EIGHT RULES THAT WOW!**

**Whether applying to college, a gig, a scholarship opportunity, or a full-time position as a musician, your music portfolio needs to be a “showcase” of you, your personality, and your music talent! Here are eight basic steps, or rules, for presenting yourself in this trendy market!**

#### **RULE #1: Every picture tells a story!**

Get a (good) camera to take pictures of you performing. Action shots of you with your instrument (vocalists at a microphone) that also captures an audience as well, validate your public performance experience. Collect programs from your performances. These clarify the magnitude or importance of the event you participated in. Video footage (with good sound recording capabilities) are equally powerful to have archived. If you do not have such recording equipment (or permission to use it during an event) then be sure to purchase any commercial grade produced recordings if made available!

#### **RULE #2: Assure the Presentation is Attractive!**

Neatness counts! Logical organization of your portfolio sends a clear message of being an individual who “has their act together!” If using a hardcopy (book) format, be sure to offer a table of contents. If designing an electronic version of a portfolio, use PDF files as a format for sending any resume, images, or portions of your collective portfolio. Other electronic formats will not ensure your information opening up in the same way that you sent it. Using any other format may result in your information arriving “jumbled” or, not being able to be opened up at all (if other computer programs are out dated, for example.)

#### **RULE #3: More is LESS, and Less is MORE**

Create your music portfolio so that you can “pick and choose” items that will target your message. For example, if you plan to audition for a position as a vocalist in a musical, your focus would be to include only items that support your skill for that opportunity. Creative individuals often blossom in other artistic areas, but too much information may overshadow the strength of the one skill you are aiming for. Be sure your portfolio collection offers clear and POSITIVE descriptions of what individuals are looking at. Avoid “information overload.”

#### **RULE #4: Customize!**

Every time you show your portfolio, your objective is to make an impression to gain favor towards a specific music opportunity. Think about what items will showcase you best for the position or opportunity you are trying for. Keep a master portfolio from which you can pick and choose items to make a “customized” presentation. This may result in having several different portfolios, each with a different focus. Some musicians have performance skills, as well as, instructor skills. Other musicians are trained in specific genres of music, but may also have compositional skills and technical equipment skills that are worthy to showcase. What ever you can do, be sure to customize your presentation. Keeping a personal “master collection” will allow you the freedom to build just the right message for just the right audience!

#### **RULE #5: A “Little Extra” Technology an YOU**

As the music world progresses, so does the technology used with it. Acoustic instruments have always held their own, but more and more these instruments are finding themselves integrated with adapters that can change the instrument’s voices, or amplify, or directly record. Become a perpetual student of your instrument! Be sure to note your experience with “the latest” regarding the technological trends. This mention can often be the “little extra” that you bring to the table that your competition doesn’t have!

#### **RULE #6: Cover Letters, Resumes, and Bios**

Typos, poor grammar, sloppy margins, run-on sentences and paragraphs are image killers. No matter how gifted you are with your music, you need to make it easy on the reader to get your message! If writing is not your skill, get help— plain and simple! Cover letters should be brief, addressing the highlights of your portfolio, and a specific example of one of your successes (found within) that you deem worthy or that qualifies you to be looked at and considered for what ever position you are applying for. The same “good writing” holds true with Resumes and Bios. Get someone to proof read your work!

#### **RULE #7: Hard Copy VS Digital**

When engaging in a “face-to-face” interview, a customized “hard copy” of your portfolio is ideal. Having a digital (CD or DVD) version, or “expanded” version included can allow for additional exposure upon a moment’s notice. Having a “web site” or “You-Tube” reference should not take the priority over a hard copy. Also, do not rely solely on a CD or DVD to be your talent ambassador. Technology today has advanced to where voices and performances can be “doctored” to misrepresent your talent—and the industry is savvy to this! If you use a CD or DVD to represent you, be sure you can duplicate the level of performance LIVE if called upon to do so!

#### **RULE #8: Tell the Truth**

The entertainment industry is a small world, and the music industry is even smaller! Mistruths and half-truths will get found out and follow you forever down your music career path. Rule of thumb, if you can’t prove it, don’t use it!

## **OTHER NOTES:**

### **Resumes:**

Design them to promote your music skills. Leave out non-essential employment or activities. Do not exceed two pages. Use a one-inch margin and a 10 or 12 point font. Be sure to begin with a "Summary Statement" (this is where you express what you are targeting.) Be prepared to have references if not listed.

### **Bios:**

This is your music life in "story form." This should be concise and objectively written, as if others were reading about you in a "production's program or brochure." By indicating your root beginnings in music, then highlighting your pivotal or greatest landmark accomplishments, the readers can skip the many stepping stones in between and still have a great understanding of you and your music career.