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10 Reasons Why Most Demo Recordings are Rejected

by [Christopher Knab](#) - [Fourfront Media & Music](#) - July 2003

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"Getting a deal" has long been the goal of many would-be artists and bands. For mostly naive reasons, most new talent feel that by securing a recording contract with a significant major or independent label, success will be guaranteed. (talk about naivete). To get this 'belief system' up and running, many musicians figure all they have to do is send off their music to a label, and a recording contract will come their way shortly.

The following list of '**10 Reasons Why Demo Are Rejected**' was gathered together after years of listening to comments made by Record Label A&R reps at music industry conferences and workshops; as well as from personal interviews with reps, and from many interviews A&R reps have given to the press. In addition, I can verify that these observations as true, from having personally listened to thousands of demos over the years.

The purpose of providing you with this information is to at least improve the odds that your music will get listened to when you submit your demos. This list will look at the most common mistakes musicians make when either shopping for a record deal, or trying to get the attention of A&R Reps with their demo recordings.

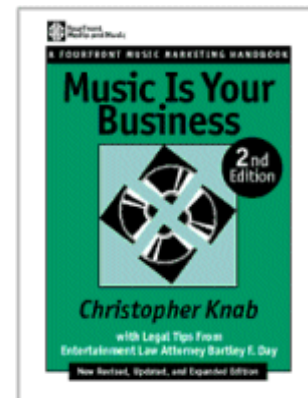
10 Reasons Demos are Rejected:

1. **No Contact Information** on CDR and/or CDR container (put your name, address, email, and phone number on both)
2. **Lack of Originality** (just because you can record, doesn't mean your music is worth recording)

The Four Fronts...

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Christopher Knab Recommends...



Music Is Your Business

Used as the official textbook for the Art Institute of Seattle's Audio program, *Music Is Your Business* is filled with insights into the music business and tactics for marketing your music. It includes examples of industry marketing documents, a sample of an artist bio and fact sheet, and checklists for starting your career and running your own record label.. [More....](#)

3. The Music Is Good, But The Artist Doesn't Play Live

(this applies to all genres of music except electronica and experimental music)

4. Poorly Recorded Material

(So you bought ProTools....so what!)

5. Best songs are not identified or highlighted on the CDR

(give the folks a break, for demos-send only 3 or 4 songs and highlight the best ones)

6. Sending Videos In Place Of CDRs

(keep it simple, in the demo mode, all anyone wants is to check out your songwriting and musicianship)

7. Sending Unsolicited Recordings

(you sent them, but they never asked for them)

8. Sending The Wrong Music To The Wrong Label

(you didn't do your research to find out what labels put out what kind of music)

9. Musicians Can't Play Their Instruments Competently

(this is so basic, but you would be astounded at how incompetent most start-up musicians are)

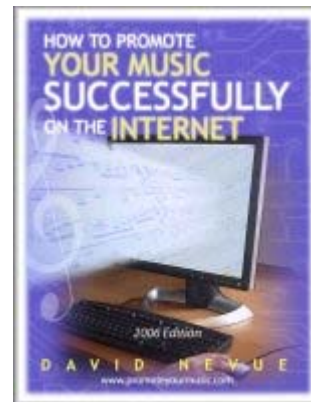
10. The Music Sucks

(this criticism is as old as music itself. you may think your music is the greatest thing since frappacinos, but most demo recordings the industry receives are as bad as the first round contestants on American Idol)

[Christopher Knab](#) is an independent music business consultant based in Seattle, Washington. He is available for private consultations on promoting and marketing independent music, and can be reached at 206-282-6116 or by email at: Chris@Knab.com

Chris Knab's new book, '[Music Is Your Business](#)' is available NOW from the Music Biz Academy [bookstore](#).

Visit the [FourFront Media and Music](#) website for more information on the business of music from Christopher Knab.



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