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## "Don't bore us, get to the chorus / Don't be a shnook, get to the hook!"

by [Larry Robkoff](#)

Okay, you've decided that you want to write songs that will be heard by many. You've begun to study commercial songs, you're reading books on commercial writing, and you're paying close attention to the successful songs of the day. You are beginning to understand how this new approach differs from the way you used to write.

By now you have no doubt discovered that the single most important component of commercial songwriting is that sometimes elusive creature known as The Hook. Can you survive as a commercial songwriter without a firm command of how to write a hook?...in a word NO! Since this is certainly the case, lets see if we can shed some light on this often misunderstood yet absolutely essential piece of commercial songwriting.

In short, the hook must be that part of the song the listener goes away remembering. Great hooks start with great ideas. Great hooks sell great songs. Great hooks are what publishers, record companies and recording artists are all looking for. Most publishers decide to pass or accept based on the hook. I have worked with major publishers that won't even listen until you have pitched the hook first.

The "Hook" can most easily be described as that part of the song that is most memorable, usually most catchy lyrically and musically, and usually most repeated. It is almost always the song's title, and is usually found within the song's chorus. Musically speaking, the hook is often the most dynamic part of the song. While most hooks are lyrical lines, they are often followed by a musical figure that enhances the lyrical line. The Dire Straits tune Sultans of Swing is a fine example of this technique.

Most successful commercial songwriters write hooks before they write songs. They do this because a great song is more easily born of a great hook. Writing a great commercial song based on an average hook is a near impossibility.

You will note that I've used the words usually, often, and almost, quite



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frequently in describing what a hook is. I want to be careful about stating rules for commercial songwriting, because in fact there are none. There will always be writers that break every possible rule and still manage to achieve commercial success. Nevertheless for most of us it makes sense to acknowledge and draw guidelines from prevailing industry standards. In essence I am saying that while many great commercial songs don't follow the rules, most do!

Write your next song from the hook. Make it interesting, accessible, catchy, and memorable and you're there!

Good Luck & Keep Writing!

Join today!

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