

Playing in Traffic Records is an independent record label started by Kevin Wommack. As an independent label, the organization is comprised of only a handful of people, including Shane, the internet technology man, fixing the websites. Kevin and the other partner Mary Jurey work with various artists as a management organization and/or as a label for the production and distribution of albums. Playing in Traffic represents various artists including Los Lonely Boys and The Steps while promoting new bands such as Dame, SPEAK, and girl pilot.

Along with one other intern from Christopher Newport University, I was responsible for maintaining and updating all the social media outlets for each band that Playing in Traffic Records manages. I was also responsible for the BMI licensing of artists and planning an event gathering all of the company's artists in the Austin area.

Through this internship, I became proficient in many different forms of social media as marketing tools including Facebook, Twitter, Wordpress (for blogs and websites), Youtube, and Instagram. Not only was I responsible for the upkeep of these outlets for Playing in Traffic, but also for all the artists that they manage. Along with this experience, I learned some of the most creative ways of publishing information and news in short form as well as the stylistic additions to posts such as photos and videos. In addition to upkeep of these sites, I created a document of suggestions for artists to keep their websites, tweets, and Facebook posts interesting and less repetitive, especially while on tour.

A large project that we interns were responsible for was promoting one of the newest artists with an extensive blog campaign. I spent hours scrolling through a music blog registry to find the appropriate blogs that promote the right type of music for our artist. From there I compiled an excel sheet with the information needed to email these blogs. We emailed over four hundred blogs to see if they would do a feature on Dame and include a release of the new music

video. We followed up with these blogs whenever their writers contacted us about featuring our artist. We were able to successfully reach out to expand our artist's fan base and increase her recognition.

Throughout the weeks working for PIT, I was responsible for registering individual artists into the BMI licensing system in order to monetize the radio and television plays of the songs the artists wrote and performed. Because of the lack of attention to the documentation of previous accounts created through the organization, I undertook the task of creating a location for all of that information to reside, thereby becoming more easily accessible.

During the first few weeks at Playing In Traffic Records, a large number of our artists were in the Austin area. I organized and planned a get together with our artists and some of our prospective artists to mingle and meet one evening at the office. I made food with the needs of the specific eaters in mind, such as having plenty of vegan and vegetarian options available. The gathering was a large success. The company was able to create stronger connections with the prospective artists and solidify relationships outside of the official office context.

Along with these bigger projects, I was responsible for working on more simple tasks such as mailers, picking up and dropping off letters and packages, verifying and changing travel arrangements, and ordering tech products. Alongside of working with social media sites, I inputted dates for tours onto various sites allowing for easy access for fans. I also researched venues for artists to book tours across the southern states. Every couple of weeks, I was responsible for email blasts to fans as well as maintaining the email lists of fans and followers. One of our artists, The Dunwells, emailed me while on tour with new fan contact information to input into the fan database stored on Reverbnation.

I would say that my largest responsibility was working directly with copy and publishing that information onto various sites. I typed copy for biographies on bands, edited copy written by the artists themselves or by Mary and Kevin, and typed information about song releases and artist news to be email blasted to thousands of fans. Typing and editing interesting posts for the various social media sources was done each work day because of social media's growing importance as a field of marketing and promoting.

As a younger person knowing my way around the web and the social media sites before becoming a part of the PIT team, I was an asset to the team already in place. As they work the managing side of things and are not always up to speed on the new web based social media, I helped to teach them how to use various sites more efficiently. As the man working IT for us continuously changed formatting, I helped to keep Mary and Kevin up-to-date while also working directly with Shane to communicate the needs and wishes of those working in the office.

From this experience, I have learned that keeping up with the music industry is a never-ending task. Every day in the office we listen to new bands, new song releases, and sometimes the oldies (anything from before January 2013). Contracts change between artists and the label. One month the label will also manage and other times Kevin will be away at the studio as a new prospect is recording. The label has seen bands fail and break apart while others succeed and go on to play with Santana.

Marketing bands also changes on a daily basis as we see popular artists using different gimmicks to promote their latest hits. As one of the members of the team left us towards the end of the internship, he was semi replaced with someone else with more specific experience. Succeeding in the music business requires years of previous experience in not only

administration and marketing, but also in the production studio and traveling with bands on tours.

Some of the highest points of my time with the internship included meeting with artists as they came into the office for meetings, visiting production studios as a prospective artist was recording an EP, and touring a new studio and sharing artists' music that has not yet been released. The environment of the office was something that I learned I loved. We worked in a house-turned-office setting where there was always music playing on someone's computer. It was very open to promote conversation and idea swapping. After spending the previous summer in a cubicle office that was constantly quiet, this new atmosphere was a welcome change. I learned that I was more motivated to accomplish things in a more open work space. I was more willing to come in earlier and leave later as well.

Some of the lower points were working on more ambiguous projects without a timeline or a goal. With Kevin in and out of the office and the constant changing of the music industry, there was sometimes a lack of communication about what Jake and I were to be working on. With the changing of people working in the office, many projects that I was working on at the time became obsolete. At this time there was a weird aura in the office because of the switching of people.

Over the past few years I have been debating what I really want to do in the long term. This internship came as an opportunity to explore a career option that I did not think that I would have the chance to otherwise. Before and during my first years of college I had entertained the idea of working somewhere in the music industry. This internship showed me that it is very difficult to get a job in the music industry be it in administration, managing, marketing, or being an artist.

This internship reinforced that I have extreme passion for music that could be transferred into working in the music industry, but the risk for doing so is very high. As much as I would want to be a part of an independent record label in the future, it is not feasible as a recent college graduate. Every person that I have talked to who is successful in working for / running an indie record label have held various other jobs in bigger corporations, managed bands on their own, and built up years' worth of contacts to make running their own record label possible. Because this internship allowed me to look into a career I had always dreamed of being a part of, I now feel that I can move on to a different career without wondering what I would be missing.

In summation, my internship this summer showed me the work and dedication to music it takes to become successful in the music industry. Although I would love to be a part of the music industry, I do not know if it is the career for me at this point in my life. I plan to continue working with Playing in Traffic via email to help aid in any way that I can until their next summer interns come in to the office. I really enjoyed the work that I did and gained many new skills that I believe to be vital for someone my age going into the job market.