



A guide To Setting Up A Record Label / Releasing Product

Step 1: Company Setup

1. Decide upon company formation type: Self trade, Limited Company (Ltd), Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) etc.
2. Register with Her Majesty's Revenue and customs: www.hmrc.gov.uk
3. Are you going to be VAT registered? If yes, register at www.hmrc.gov.uk
4. Register your company name if you're going to be a limited company at: www.companieshouse.gov.uk

Step 2: Number Systems

1. Catalogue numbers are allocated to every release and are used by a number of organisations to identify that release (e.g. PPL, OCC, Millward Brown). Contact the PRS For Music to firstly check that your chosen configuration has not been used. Contact the audio Production Team on +44 (0)208 378 7744.
2. All releases must be allocated a bar code, even if it is a one track single. The barcode in the physical sense is what the shops use when customers purchase your product, however regardless of digital or physical release, the barcode is one of the identifying factors when the Official Charts Company are matching sales to product.

Barcodes can be obtained sometimes from your distributor / aggregator or manufacturer; you can also purchase them yourself from GS1. GS1 is the official company that looks after all the barcodes in the world. Via membership of BPI and AIM you can obtain individual barcodes, or 100 barcodes. Other options include full membership which is more costly but does give you up to 100,000 barcodes.

GS1 can be contacted by phoning +44 (0)207 655 9000 or visiting www.gs1uk.org

When placing your barcode on a physical product, ensure the image is in mono and to the correct specification to ensure it can be scanned.

3. International Standard Recording Codes (ISRC) must be assigned to each track and that code will remain with the track for eternity. These can be obtained from the PPL by either phoning +44 (0)207 534 1122 or emailing member.info@ppluk.com

Step 3: Registrations

1. Register your release electronically via the Catco database. This can be obtained by logging into the PPL Member database and downloading the application. This will then notify PRS for Music of the release. You will also need to notify Millward Brown otherwise your release will not be chart registered.
2. If you are releasing a physical product, you must also notify Millward Brown by completing their official form and sending two copies of the release which will ultimately be placed in the British Library Sound Archive.

Contact: The Chart Unit, Millward Brown, Tachbrook Park, Olympus Avenue, Warwick, CV34 6RJ or telephone +44 (0)1926 826610.

3. Other companies to look at for registering your product:
 - a. ROVI (Music database) www.rovicorp.com.
 - b. Grace Note (CD Recognition Service) www.gracenote.com/company_info/FAQ/FAQs
 - c. Nielsen Music Control (Monitors air play) www.nielsenmusiccontrol.com
 - d. Shazam (Mobile phone song recognition) musicteam@shazamteam.com
4. Ensure your label and musicians who perform on the tracks are registered with the PPL. Membership is free but takes a little time. Your membership number should be placed on the Catco database and if you have any radio plays, the PPL will eventually pay to the label (50%) and the musicians (50%).

Links

Useful links to help with research:

PRS for Music – www.prsformusic.com

PPL (Phonographic Performance Ltd) – www.ppluk.com

CATCO (Part of the PPL)

Industry bodies:

BPI (British Recording Industry) – www.bpi.co.uk

AIM (Association of Independent Music) – www.musicindie.org

BMR (British Music Rights) – www.bmr.org

ASCAP (American society of composers, authors and publishers) – www.ascap.com

IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) – www.ifpi.org

Release Check List

		Physical Release	Digital Release
1	Recording of tracks, mixing, naming, ordering and mastering etc.	✓	✓
2	Embed track data: catalogue code, track names, ISRC codes into tracks via Mastering.	✓	
3	Decide on how the product is to be packaged.	✓	
4	Design artwork to factory specifications or for digital for download stores specifications (no more than 1500 x 1500 pixels and 300 dpi).	✓	✓
5	Insert mono barcode.	✓	
6	Insert catalogue number.	✓	
7	Check and double check artwork before sending to manufacturer.	✓	
8	Complete Catco Electronic Form and have MCPS, PPL and OCC Notified.	✓	✓
9	Upload tracks to various download stores and provide meta data above (barcodes, ISRC, track names etc).		✓
10	Create press release.	✓	✓
11	Send two copies of product to Millward Brown.	✓	
12	Send copies to distributor / aggregator.	✓	✓
13	Send out copies to press, journalists and reviewers.	✓	✓
14	Two months before a release, send out copies to radio producers etc.	✓	✓
15	Send physical copies out to distributors ready to go into stores.	✓	
16	Send out 'one sheets', also known as sales sheets, to distributors and aggregators.	✓	✓

Most importantly keep people / partners in the loop with events, performances, publicity, press and radio that is going on. A weekly email will help show that your campaign is growing and achieving results.

Prior to having finished product	Three Months to Release	Two Months to Release	One Month to Release
Recording etc.	Press release and discs to press. Book gigs.	Update press release and send discs to radio.	Ensure local media coverage.
Discs pressed (if applicable).	Upload to digital stores.	Sales sheets to distributors.	Product to distributor (poss. 6 weeks prior).
Notification to Catco, OCC and MCPS etc.	Ensure website is updated & busy.	Send out reviews.	Tie up loose ends.