



A EPIC List Of The Best Tools For Musicians!



oDesk

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As you know, it can be hard to make it in the music industry. It's because of this that I created this top list of tools for musicians!

As with any other profession, it's possible to use tools to make your job a lot easier. A lot of the tools listed on this page are free, while some are paid. All however will help your journey in the music industry easier, saving you time and money along the way.

Before we get into it, please note that not everyone will need every tool mentioned in this guide. The tools you need will depend on what stage of your music career you're currently at, and what you need done.

That said, **there are some tools that most of you will most likely need asap.** These tools are marked '**Vital**' so you know it's an important tool which you should be using. Under them I mention why you should be using it and how.

All tools not marked vital are still useful, and many of them will still make things a lot easier for you if you decide to use them. If you find this list helpful, please share it with other musicians wherever you can.

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[General Tools For Musicians](#)

By *[Shaun Letang of Music Industry How To](#)*. *[Get another free important ebook here](#)*.



There were a bunch of tools which would have fit into a few of the different categories below, so were put into this one instead. All round good tools with multiple uses:

Vital: A Computer / Laptop

A [computer or laptop](#)* is vital for managing your music career. Not only can you sort a lot of the business related tasks on there, but you can also use it to promote your music and produce music if you want to go down that path (requires music production software to do the recording part, see the 'Music Production Equipment' section below for the required tools).

If you've a small budget, you can get a cheap laptop or computer which should do the job of managing the business side of things and promoting your music online. If you're aiming to become a producer or music industry graphic designer, you're going to need a faster and powerful computer so it can keep up with all the music you'll be making.

I personally use a PC, but it's up to you if you use a PC or Mac.

Vital: A Good Internet Connection

As well as having a computer, you're going to need to have that computer connected to the internet. Having a strong internet connection will allow you to [promote your music online](#), network with people all around the world, and find new opportunities which you wouldn't have found otherwise.

If you can't get a strong and reliable internet connection, any type of connection will do.

A Printer

A [printer](#) can come in handy for many reasons in your music career. You may want to print out your lyrics, print out invoices, print out set routines etc.

Ink can get expensive though, so be sure you only really use it when needed.

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Vital: A Smartphone (Android or Apple)

Smartphones are becoming increasingly accessible to all. While you don't have to have the very latest handset, having some kind of smartphone is a great help for your music career. They're basically small portable computers, and with the help of apps, they can help your music career in many ways.

You can use your smartphone to communicate with fans on social networks, jot down lyrics, find real time directions to venues you're gigging at, accept payments, communicate with fans on the move and MUCH more. Oh, and it also makes calls. :)

If you haven't yet got a smartphone, get one. Think of it as a business investment.

Vital: Odesk

Independent musicians don't have to be fully independent; sometimes it's a good idea to draw in some help. That said, it's not always easy to get help at a cheap and affordable price. That's where Odesk comes in. On here you can hire people from all around the world to do things for you. Need artwork? You can find a good designer. Need someone to produce you a track or do voice overs for your project? You can get that too. Easily hire people for these and other tasks as and when needed.

Tools To Help With Songwriting



If you create your own lyrics, the below tools will help make things easier for you. If you're a songwriter by trade, they should help you too.

Pen & Lyric Book (Notepad)

Ok, so I thought I'd start out with the very basics. :)

This one should be obvious so I won't spend much time on it. In order to write down your lyrics, you need the tools. I suggest you go for a small sized note pad which

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you can carry around with you. You never know when you're going to get a good idea for a lyric, so if you can whip out your pen and notebook wherever you are, that's ideal.

Vital: A Android Or Apple Smartphone

While pen and paper used to be the staple for songwriters, these days smartphones are becoming an increasingly popular tool for writing down lyrics on the move. That said, you need to install one of the following apps to make this work:

Lyric Writing App For Your Smartphone

Most smartphones come preinstalled with a 'note pad' type app ([Android](#) / [Apple](#)). While these are often all you need for writing down your lyrics easily, there are also some 'premium' apps out there which you can buy for extra features or to take away ads. Until you're a earning musician you should stick with the free apps though, as for most they do the job just fine.

Songwriting Guide

If you're still new to songwriting and want to get your writing skills up, you'll want to check my [guide on writing a song](#). If you've read that and want extra help however, you can also get a bigger book on the subject. [This one](#) by Pat Pattison is highly recommended.

Music Production Equipment



Ok, so this set of tools is only for you if you produce music (make instrumentals / backing tracks / beats). If you don't, feel free to move on to the next section.

Vital: A Computer

See above in the 'General Tools For Musicians' section for more information. You'll need a computer to run your music production software on, otherwise you won't be able to produce music.

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Vital (For Producers): Music Production Software

So unless you want to go to the studio and spend a stupidly large amount of cash on making a track, you're going to want to get your own music production software. Music production software is the tool that allows you to make your beats and productions.

Your budget and how new you are to producing will determine which software you should get. If you already have a lot of experience producing music and know you want to take it more seriously (and have the budget to do so), [Cubase](#) is a good tool which many professional producers use. If however you're just starting out, haven't made your first track yet and want to learn the ropes (as well as see if it's for you in the long-run), you should go for the much cheaper (yet still good) software [Dubturbo](#).

Both of these will allow you to make backing tracks which you can either sell or give to vocalists.

A Condenser Mic

A [good condenser microphone](#) is needed if you want to record samples to put in your songs. I wouldn't however recommend you record full vocal songs in your house unless you have top quality equipment and know how to properly mix down a song. If these things aren't in place, your best bet is to hire a studio to record your vocals in. This will give a much better product and impression of your music.

Tools For Marketing Your Music



Ok, so now on to my favorite part. The below tools are useful for when it comes to promoting your music. You can see why music marketing is so important in [this free ebook](#) I've written, so download that before anything else.

Vital: A Professional Website

A good website is the heart of a musician's online marketing campaign. It gives fans

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a place to connect with you on different levels, and works as a place to turn people who have heard about you for the first time into long-term fans.

I've written a guide [making a professional music site](#), so if you want to get one up easily and asap check that out. All the needed tools are listed in that guide.

While social networking sites are also important, your website will be your most effective marketing tool.

A Professional Email Address

When you're approaching companies for gig or other industry figures, you can't approach them with the same yahoo email address you've had since you first discovered the internet. Instead, you want a professional email address that reflects your music and makes you stand out from the crowd.

When you make your website using the guide in the above section, you'll be able to create email addresses around your website name. So if your website was 'www.myreallycoolband.com', you could make email addresses such as 'contact@myreallycoolband.com' and 'yourname@myreallycoolband.com'. This looks really professional and reflects well on you.

Vital: Hootsuite For Making Social Media Easier

[Hootsuite](#) is a really powerful tool which will help you schedule your social promotions in advance, and manage all your accounts (Facebook and Twitter) in one easy location. While they have a paid option, the free version will most likely be enough for you. It's enough for me. :)

This makes social media a lot quicker and easier. Make sure you [download the app](#) too so can use it on the move.

Vital: Aweber For Email Marketing

[Aweber](#) is a email marketing tool which allows you to collect email addresses from website visitors, automatically send them updates via autoresponders and more. You can see why this is important for your music career [in this guide](#). A top resource for musicians.

Vital: Social Media Accounts

As well as the above Hootsuite tool, you'll actually need social profiles where fans can interact with you. While there are hundreds if not thousands of social networks out there, you only really need to set up a [Twitter](#), [Youtube](#) and [Facebook](#) account to start off with. This because social profiles take time to run, so start out with the above three and only move on to others if you've enough fans demanding it.

SoundCloud

[Soundcloud](#) is a site where you can host your music and have people comment on it (among many other things). There are two main ways in which you should use

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your SoundCloud account:

1. To use their media player widgets. It's possible to host your songs on their site, then add the 'widgets' they supply to your website.
If your website is made on Wordpress, there are also other media players you can use on your site instead of this (search their plugins for an audio player). That said, a lot of people are used to using SoundCloud players, so you may want to use it on your site.
2. To look for collaborations. If you're looking for backing tracks or guest vocals, there are thousands of musicians with SoundCloud profiles who you can contact to possibly work with.

A Music Marketing Course

While all the marketing tools on this page can be extremely useful when used right, it's not always easy to know how to market your music correctly. The last thing you want is to think you're heading in the right path with something, only to find out months later it's not having any effect on your music career.

Taking a [music marketing course](#) can help with this. It'll give you the steps you need to be taking right away, and will save you years of trial and error in the process.

Tweet Adder

If you're actively trying to build up your Twitter following, [Tweet Adder](#) may be the tool for you. While they no longer allow you to follow people automatically (this is against Twitter's TOS), they do make it easier to know who you should and shouldn't be following. When to unfollow people, and various other things that'll make building up an interactive Twitter audience much easier. A handy tool.

Free Business Cards

Business cards are handy to have, especially as the music industry will require you to do some kind of networking to get to the top. If you're on a budget, Vistaprint offers [free business cards](#) to all, you just have to pay for postage.

These business cards can be used to network with independent musicians. That said, if you're approaching people bigger than you, you'll want to make the best impression possible. In this instance, order Vistaprint's non-branded business cards. This may cost a bit more, but as the way you present yourself in the music industry, it's worth it.

Tweet For A Track

[Tweet For A Track](#) is a service designed for musicians. The concept is simple: you host a track on their website, and if your fans want to download it, they have to send a Tweet which you've pre-written (which will also include a link to your song for other music lovers to download). Once they've shared the Tweet, they will be able to download your song for free.

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This is great for getting people to do some promotion for you, and a much better option than giving your music out as a direct free download.

Equipment Needed For Making Music Videos



While you could always hire someone to make a music video for you, if you want to [make your own music video](#), here are some tools you'll need (more tools listed in the above guide):

Video Camcorder

This pretty much goes without saying, but if you want to make a music video, you need a camcorder to record it all. Depending on your budget and the type of video you're making, you can either get a [standard consumer level HD camcorder](#), or a [higher end consumer level HD camcorder](#). I'd recommend going for the latter if you have the budget and want to make music video that are TV quality. If you're just going for Youtube videos however, the former is fine.

Video Editing Software

In order to make your videos, you'll need some video editing software. While most modern computers come with them already preinstalled (Windows Live Movie Maker for PC and iMovie for Mac), if you want to create a video with better graphics and effects, you'll want to pick up a more powerful piece of software.

[This guide](#) shows you a list of good video editing software which you could use for a decent price (disclaimer, I haven't used all of the options on that list). [Final Cut Pro](#) is also a very good option if you have a Mac, as it's what many professional film makers and video editors use. That said, it is quite expensive if you buy the full featured version (lower price versions also available).

Green Screen

A [green screen](#) is the screen you put behind you during a video shoot, in order to add special effects to your video during the editing process. It's possible for a video editor to take out the green screen, and add in any special effects you choose. Just

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be sure you're not wearing green when using this screen, as your clothes will become invisible during the editing stage. :)

Music Distribution



If you want to get your songs out there and offer them for sale, this is the section for you. Here are a list of tools which will help you with this.

Vital (Once You Have Songs Recorded): Songcast

[Songcast](#) is an online digital distributor. When you sign up to them (it's free to make an account), you're given the option to upload your music and have it distributed to various online digital download stores. They'll deliver your music to iTunes, Amazon MP3, Google Play, Napster and many other online shops. They'll also collect any royalties you make, and pay them to you once a month.

E-Junkie

If you want to sell your music on your own site, [E-Junkie](#) is one of the best options around. It allows you to add a shopping cart to your website, which people can use to buy your music. When they checkout and pay, E-Junkie automatically sends your music to the buyer via a secure link. You can set the properties of this link however you like, for example you can make it so it's only downloadable 3 times. After that the link will automatically stop working, meaning if someone shares that link around, not as many people will be able to steal your music.

Getting Artwork For Your Projects

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Need graphics for your next release or a general promotion? Then look no further than these options:

Odesk For Finding Graphic Designers

See the above 'General' section for what [Odesk](#) is. Simply put, you can hire people on Odesk to do graphic design for you. There are a lot of very talented designers who use that site, many who charge a much cheaper price than you'd be quoted going through a graphic design company. Have a look and see who you can find.

99 Designs

[99 Designs](#) is a competition website for designers. How it works is you let people know what you want and set your price, then watch all the designs roll in. After a set amount of time, you pick your favorite design out of all the applicants and you get to keep it. People will design logos, graphics, websites and more for you on here; a great option if you want a lot of different options to choose from.

The Top Resources For Musicians - Any Other Tools You Use?

So there you have it, some of the best tools I've found for musicians. I hope you find them useful, and they make your music career much easier to manage.

Now, down to you. Are there any other tools you feel could be useful to other musicians out there that weren't mentioned in this guide? If so, email me with the headline 'MIHT Tool Suggestion' and let me know. If I get enough people recommending a certain tool and I can see it has benefits, I may just add it to this list. :)

Please note though that I can't respond to all the emails sent on adding a tool, but thanks in advance for the suggestion. Also, **please only suggest a tool once**. If I get more than one email from you suggesting the same tool, it'll increase the likelihood the tool will not be added.

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Finally, please share this guide if you found it useful, and tell all your music making friends. :)

Shaun Letang.

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