



## Choosing A Name

*My band needs a name. The band that has the rehearsal space next door was building a decent following before they got a letter from a lawyer telling them to stop using their band name or else. Turned out a band almost 2000 miles away already owned it. Attendance at their shows is still good – but not what it was. We don't want that to happen to us so how do we pick a name that someone else isn't already using?*

If you are serious about getting your music out there to the masses - choosing a name that fits your style of music and the image you want to project is vital. Unfortunately, too many artists just pick a name, start using it, build a following, and then when things are just starting to happen – they find out that someone else already had superior rights to the name.

Finding the right name can be a frustrating and slow process. Any name that sounds like or looks like an existing artist's name could be a problem – even your legal name could be a problem if your name is the same or similar to another artist. It's not just the artists that are filling stadiums that you need to worry about either. You need to make sure that you aren't using a name being used by an artist that is filling small clubs in Buffalo, or that has a single getting airplay on college radio in Boston too.

So where do you begin? The best choices are names that are completely made up, a couple of words used together in an unusual way, or a random phrase. Some examples are Chamillionaire, Weezer, Coldplay, Arctic Monkeys, The Futureheads, Death Cab for Cutie, She Wants Revenge, Nine Black Alps.

Once you come up a few names that you really like you need to do some research to see if you can find anyone else using the name – or a name that is similar enough that fans might get confused. Names like Cold Pay, Corn, The Ushers, and Beyond Say, are probably not going to be good choices.

If you are really serious about your band – then after you have narrowed the list down with your own research you should also have an attorney do a basic name search of your top three names. The attorney will be able to provide you with a report on which names are good, which are likely to be problematic in the future, and which are already being used.

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