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Jingles, Commercials & Singing On The Money!

By Tom Gauger

As a writer and former talent booking agent with the William Morris Agency, as well as a veteran

jingle singer, my ears are always piqued when I hear an extraordinarily good spot. My interest is augmented further when I hear an incredible lead vocal and backup singer on that same commercial as well. I've always been fascinated with jingle singing and commercial singing in general, when I look at both the incredible talent and the money being made in the industry as a whole. As I talk to people wanting to engage the jingle industry and make a career of it as a jingle singer, there are a number of areas that I point out as crucial and, with the few minutes remaining in this article, I will share.

I am well aware that many of you reading this article would love to be singing on the next McDonalds commercial. I am also aware that most won't get the chance, not so much because of their singing abilities or inabilities, but because they don't know how to go about breaking into the market. There are a number of reasons that jingle singers get paid the big bucks and there's a reason that jingle singers tend to be around for awhile with long term longevity in the industry. Let's me share with you and uncover some of the mysteries surrounding the jingle singing market and how you might obtain session work.

First let's take a look at your singing abilities and then we'll transform that into an image of what your jingle singing demo ought to look and sound like and then we'll look at the pr and marketing side to your jingle singing campaign. What are the qualities of your voice? Do you have a smooth voice?, or is it husky or gritty sounding? Are you a blender or are you a lead vocalist? There's no right or wrong answer here, just the basics to start conceptualizing what your demo is going to sound like. It's important to know right up front, that most of you simply can't put together your own jingle singing demo. You won't know the ins and outs to what piques the ears of the jingle houses, nor know what styles and lastly what order to execute your demo in. The "My friend has a computer, keyboard and mic," approach won't get it. As I've stated in a number of writings to date, that your jingle demo has to sound like you've already arrived and have been singing commercials for years. Your demo has to come off like you are a veteran and seasoned singer. Don't hesitate to contact ReelMusician.com for further info on jingle singing demos and get an informed and honest look at a real jingle singing demo campaign.

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As you begin to look at and focus your energies on your jingle demo, you will want to begin looking at jingle concepts that are going to emphasize your areas of expertise and minimize your weaknesses. If you have a gritty voice, then by all means, focus your energies on jingles that enhance your edgy vocal. You will most likely include a lot of lead vocal jingles and a few group sings. These group sings will most likely be up in your face type sings with lots of energy. If you are a blender then you will most likely look at including group sings, showcasing your blending qualities and some targeted lead spots that sound like you command the stage. You have to be careful and pick your spots so that you truly sound like you command that spot and not just a forced or pushed jingle to include on your reel. Again, that's why you should visit ReelMusician for ideas and let the pros that know this market, create a jingle reel designed specifically for you and your particular vocal qualities.

Once you have established and recorded your jingle reel, you will want to begin the pr and marketing phase. You must know in advance, that jingle houses tend to stay with the same singers for a number of reasons, but none that you can't overcome, but ought to know up front. Jingle houses, like most

individuals, go with what they know and are comfortable with. They know, that "so and so" sounds like this and so they use "so and so." Keep in mind that commercial turn around time is usually pretty fast. Sometimes a commercial comes in from the advertising agency and the turn around is 24 hours. As a writer at a jingle house, you don't have much time to experiment on new singers or take a chance on a new singer unless, their jingle demo sounds so good and sounds like they've been at it for years, that they venture out on an incredible sounding unique talent - That's how you break into the market. Let's look at some precursor ideas to what we just described.

Once you have your new jingle singer demo in hand and are comfortable with the quality, make sure to have included on the front cover your name with picture, contact number and the year and season - ie. John Doe 555-5555 Spring 2006. This is how the front cover of a jingle demo is produced. Now on the inside sleeve include again your name, contact number, year and season along with the names of the jingles in order. You will want to start calling on the jingle houses and submitting your new reel, but before you do, make sure that every element is correct. As you contact the jingle houses, make sure that you have your speaking delivery down and answers to possible questions if any. Also make sure and get an email address to correspond with and to submit further demos by way of emailing mp3's. You will want to start in your local market, but eventually you will want to broaden your horizons and venture out in to the major markets that surround you like Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, New York, Los Angeles and other major markets.

Don't be afraid to produce sequel demos to cross the paths of the jingle producers another time to keep your name rolling across their desk. And lastly keep good records of your conversations taking in any criticism and being polite, yet confident with a go get it attitude. Don't be afraid to tell the producer, "I want to sing one of your spots and I want to be included on the next workable session." Don't be too pushy, but let them be aware of your commitment, drive and passion.

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e-books "The Jingle Singer's Guide," and "Secrets To Great Song Demos," may be downloaded at

www.ReelMusician.com

Sing Jingles – Your Singing Investment!

By Tom Gauger

After being in the music business as long as I have, you meet a lot of people - many of whom are extremely gifted and others, well there are others to. As a professional jingle singer, former talent booking agent with the William Morris Agency and founder of ReelMusician.com, I've heard it all - The excuses that is. Many individuals want the glamorous lifestyle of studio singing work, but they don't want to make the investment that is needed to put them on the map singing commercials. Let's spend a few minutes looking at a typical investment to get you started singing jingles and general session work.

By now, you've seen all kinds of services, prices and wonder what you should do in terms of your singer reel. Let's spend a few minutes exploring what you shouldn't do. The biggest mistake new singers make is to assume that their friend's studio is going to get the job done - That might work for a rough draft or even a fairly polished song or artist demo, but when you want to play in the game with the big cats singing commercials, you better have a singer reel that sounds like downtown. You can't afford not to have an incredible singer reel out there and chances are, your friend can't write or figure out what the jingle producers are looking for and what will catch their attention. There are jingles that are sung professionally on the air and then there are the singer reels that have to establish credibility with producers and writers and believe it or not, sometimes there is a big difference on what you should include on your reel and what you shouldn't even though it sounds like current commercials. Remember you have to grab their attention and that may or might not be different from the niche of jingles currently in vogue.

How much should a jingle cost and where do I go? Great questions. There will be significant difference in prices when you're looking to record your singing reel. There are plenty of folks online who will try to charge you a mint and you wouldn't be any better off with them as opposed to your friend's studio. At ReelMusician.com we try our best to offer affordable jingle reels for singers trying to break into the market and deliver the demos that just knock your socks off. We don't let anything leave the studio until it meets the needs of the singer capitalizing on their strengths and weaknesses. When you are looking

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to record your first demo always ask for samples or at least listen to them online and you might ask them for references.

How much should I plan on spending to get my jingle reel done right? You should plan on investing a minimum of \$500 and really push to spend closer to a \$1,000 when it's all said and done. Just to give you an idea, at ReelMusician.com, and because of the demand our prices will most likely increase shortly, we start out with jingle singing packages of (3) for \$290, (5) for \$380 and (7) for \$495. You will have to include studio time to record your lead vocals on these tracks, which doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg, but you might figure an additional \$200 – \$300 and then the cost of making your CD. Most individuals burn their own CDs with easy software that creates the jewel cover artwork. That's a realistic picture of your costs. And believe me, we're not getting rich at those prices. Think about it and divide the total cost by the number of jingles and it's actually very affordable and cost effective. For individuals really willing to make an investment in their singing career, it's a great way to go. What stops most individuals from following a very doable dream? I'm not sure I have all of the answers.

Many individuals have the dream, but not the follow through. Many yet, have the dream, but are willing to spend \$5 – \$7 for an appetizer a couple of times a week and blow all kinds of money frivolously

before they are willing to make a real investment in their future. You will find that most individuals fall into what I call the "I have a dream, but refuse to follow up with any significant resources to make it happen even though I spend all kinds of money on drinks at the bar, and many other a sundry of frivolous spending. These individuals will often make the call to ReelMusician.com asking if we represent folks for commercials, but when told of the basic costs and needs of a professionally written and produced jingle singer reel, tell you that they will, "think about it" and get back with you. They have no intention of getting back with you because they spend their money on what they want to spend their money on - And so we can't help them, nor should we. We try as best we can to help individuals who are really putting forth their best effort not because they are spending money with us, but because they have the dream and are really going after it.

Your investment in your singing career will also require a start up time investment of meeting with jingle singers in your area to get their ideas, contacts, etc as well as finding the key players in your immediate area who are writing commercials and industrial music. Once you have established or are building your singing base in your area, you will want to branch out and do the same in other markets. You will want to follow up in markets that tend to pay well if you are going to travel like Chicago, L.A., New York, Atlanta, Dallas, etc. You will need to keep a simple contact sheet either in your computer or on paper and keep up with the conversations, telephone numbers and all contact information. Your follow up will be key.

In closing, get the best possible jingle singer reel, with a great looking CD cover, and follow up with individuals like I've just described and you will be well on your way to singing studio and commercial work! Email us and let us know how you're doing.

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