

# ECONOMICS

## Do It Yourself: Self-Promotion in the Digital Age

### Related Subjects:

Media Literacy  
Math  
Language Arts

### Objectives:

- o Examine how digital technologies are affecting the recording industry
- o Create a basic self-distribution and marketing campaign

### Materials:

Interview with DMX (download from Web site)

### Resources:

- o **Self-Promotion for the Creative Person: Get the Word Out About Who You Are and What You Do** (Lee Silber 2001)
- o **Guerilla Music Marketing Handbook** (Bob Baker 2001)

### Introduction:

This lesson is intended to have students understand how media consolidation and digital technologies have affected music distribution, as well as examine alternate routes for publishing and promotion. Historically, the music business has been dangerous waters for emerging artists; often times, they get locked into a long-term contract that favors the label much more than it does the artist. This is slowly starting to change, however, as more artists create their own label or self-distribute their music. Digital technologies have helped to facilitate this change as the cost of recording and distributing a CD has come down to a level that many people can afford.

In addition, the Internet has drastically affected the recording industry. Engage your students in a discussion and examination of these developments. How has the Internet changed the way music is sold and marketed? How has Hip-Hop been affected by these changes? Who stands to gain?

### Activity:

Have students read the interview with DMX and discuss (screen for language). In the interview he says, "...the highest paid artist gets 18 cents off the dollar and the record company still owns the finished product. It's robbery, straight robbery...I refuse to give another dime to that record label, to Def Jam." Questions to consider:

- o What are the implications of DMX's stance?
- o What options does he have?
- o What is his current situation with Def Jam?
- o Which artists are currently self-distributing their music?
- o How effective have they been?



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## Production activity:

Have students, either individually or in groups, select a fictitious name for a new Hip-Hop artist. Their assignment will be to create a self-distribution and marketing campaign for this artist. This will be done without the support of a record label so the budget will have to be realistic. As they lay out the plan, students should consider the following.

- o Who will the artist appeal to?
- o What will be his/her main message?
- o What is the name of the CD?
- o What are the basic design themes for the marketing campaign?
- o What materials will be needed? Postcards, posters, Web site?
- o How will they get word out? Word of mouth, the Internet, viral e-mail?
- o How many copies will they need to print?
- o How much will all this cost?

## Related production activity:

Have students execute the design campaign. They should create the cover art for the CD, as well as an accompanying postcard or poster. They should pay close attention to the basic design principals as they choose their layout, colors, font, and text.

