

Marketing FAQ

How would you go about developing a marketing campaign for a new jazz act and their first CD release within a limited budget?

(questions answered by Harry Leckstein Freeport records)

- Don't do any of it unless you're prepared to back it all up with lots of live performance.
- Jazz marketing and PR is no different to any other – it's good artists recording good work and promoting it live and via any and all available media platforms within budget.
- Start where you can within budget – this is why the internet is such a good DIY ethic media platform. Get a site up, Myspace up, Youtube stuff, album and live reviews on fanzines and lifestyle sites, and exclusives / hosted shows on internet radio and downloads on the music retail services - all of which can be done from the living room with a good computer, time and a brain.
- Then, when that stuff is set up, start to play live in the right places and a lot. Build a live following. Record live shows. Podcast them.
- Then print up 2 sided full-colour a6 flyers with a picture of you, your web site url, and an incentive to visit and register (free track etc) – and hand them out at every venue you visit and play at (café's, libraries, venues, shops, anywhere). With one Google of "flyer printers" you can find 5000 units at around £100 inclusive of VAT + delivery anywhere in the UK. That will keep you going for 3-5 months of gigging.
- Then when you have live and music reviews to speak of short list the labels you would like to work with, call them up and ask to speak to the head of A&R or marketing. It's a trade and they trade so trade with them. Keep calling until they take your call or tell you to "F#\$k Off!" (so what did you lose, nothing!) and then send them your CD, bio, reviews and a cover letter inviting them to see you at a gig that's easy for them to get to (even include the tickets).

That will get the product out there...if it's good, as long as you continue, things will happen.

What kind of budget is realistic for a digital marketing campaign?

How long is a piece of string but you can achieve an awful lot for little or not money and just your time. A rough guide (ie: these prices vary a lot) might be:

- Template website with registration, downloads, EPK area etc: £400
- 150 CDs / press releases made and sent out to sites: £250
- 5000 a6 2 sided full colour flyers designed and printed: £160
- Own download store created and maintained for a year: £300
- Specialist internet marketing firm campaign for 2 months: £1,000

The majority of all other stuff on online has no set up costs but yields the service provider an ongoing %age of future download sales.

And, going back to the first point made in section 1: don't do any of it unless you're prepared to back it all up with lots of live performance. The Internet is just another medium that, luckily for independents, has a lower barrier to entry threshold than the physical world, but it still has to be supported with solid live performance and physical interaction with fans.

What does a public relations person actually do?

Good PR is good time management and a legitimate address book.

You give them the tools – the CDs, press photos, videos, banners, artwork, artist available for interview – and they push to ensure that their contacts a) receive the material on time to review, b) review it c) run exclusives on it d) do all of the above at the same time as the rest of the campaign hits guurr, live venues, websites etc.

Good PR is you on or near the front cover as opposed to buried next to the classifieds but don't expect any PR to create your brand from scratch to front cover on their own. Good PR also works with good product – in this case artists they know a) work hard, b) know how to treat press (ie their contacts), c) have a good and growing reputation and d) that they like. The last one is important because they are a hired Avon Lady for your campaign and no one can sell a product they don't believe in.

Do you think that Ring Tones are a good market to get involved with for a jazz musician?

Times are moving on and mobiles are quickly becoming MP3 enabled with storage capacity for 100 tracks and over and once stored, a consumer can also turn an MP3 into a ring tone or message alert with a quick "save as" option on the handset. Consequently it is my impression that the first phase "£3 / ring tone" market is all but dead and already being replaced by MP3 tracks and videos sold through mobile platforms that either come with the ring tone capability bundled or you just convert yourself using the device.

If you want to digitize your content for sale as ring tones on your site there are companies like Musinter who will do the job and host a page of ring tones for you but more and more the deals being done are with larger platforms that will handle your content for download, mobile and video platform distribution all in one go.

Given the option it's always good to offer something unique to the mobile user that suits the medium of the handset – perhaps a short interview or acoustic version of the full track or a ring tone length exclusive remix – as long as you don't have to spend more to create the extras.

I hear these terms interruptive and permission marketing but I don't really understand their significance or what they are... Can you explain it briefly?!

Prior to the Internet all marketing was by and large known as "interruptive" marketing by the trade. This word referred to marketing strategies and tactics that "interrupted" the daily life of a consumer – Tesco's style of marketing.

While marketing companies worldwide sought new and inventive ways to interrupt our daily routines they were continually aware that "interruptive" marketing had its limitations. It was difficult to quantify how many people saw the advert and it was even more difficult to interact with them and build a commercial relationship. One just hoped that because they engaged the interruptive ad during a subconsciously susceptible moment that the message delivered would translate into a future sale at a later date.

Then along came the Internet...

All of a sudden marketing could not only find and reach a targeted audience on a world wide level it also knew who their consumers were socially, geographically and demographically and, through the collection of email addresses, companies could finally strike up a meaningful, two way, commercial relationship with their consumers...the holy grail of marketing!

Costly and restricted "interruptive" marketing campaigns gave way to "Permission" marketing campaigns using the tools of the Internet mixed with cross-media incentives to use the Internet. The name "Permission" marketing was coined because the brand continually seeks "permission" from the consumer to interact or sell to them via a newsletter or exclusive backstage / fan area or competition incentive or option to get new products or services before anyone else etc.

Permission, if granted, is normally done so through name and email registration or the input of additional consumer information – "If you give me your mobile number I'll send you text alerts of the band's UK tour diary". The term, Permission Marketing, was originally coined by the US Internet marketing guru Seth Godin who wrote a book of the same name which I highly recommend.

When it came to permission marketing techniques music, and the music industry, were ideally suited to take advantage. Music could travel over the internet with ease but, more importantly, "interruptive" marketing was costly, restricted and largely ineffectual when it came to cross selling music catalogue (ie: "bought this artist did you?... how about this one then?"). Permission marketing radically changed this for labels.

Record labels, publishers and music retailers worldwide had little or no knowledge about the consumer that walked into a high street music store, spent 25 minutes browsing, selected three products from three separate genres, paid for them anonymously and then walked right out of the shop door. Walking, talking, living goldmines of consumer information and future sale opportunities breezed in and out of record stores worldwide on a daily basis without leaving any consumer identity or product feedback. What a waste!

With the Internet, digital music stores could tell so much about you it was hard to take it all in:

- Who you were (register your name and email for an account)?
- Where you lived (where shall we send the CD to when you've bought it)?
- Were you male or female?
- What day was your birthday (we'll send you a voucher)?
- How long did you spend in our store (in seconds) and what made you leave so soon?
- What did you look at (every product you clicked on and in what order ie: did one product subconsciously trigger you to search for another similar or did you read a consumer's review and look for it)?
- What did you buy in the end?
- Do you want to join their fan clubs and get exclusive access to important new stuff from them in the future before anyone else can?
- Seeing as you bought that don't you want to go and see them live too because you can get £x off their next show that visits your town right here?
- If you bought that, that and that, perhaps you might like this and wouldn't you just like to know that you can also buy recently re-mastered back catalogue or new live performance CDs?
- Did you like the in-store experience (because if you can recommend a friend via email to us we'll give you some more vouchers in return for their email)?
- If you forget to come back or remember where you found us can we drop you a reminder of how great we are to shop with every month or so?

"Permission" required for all of the above – hence "permission" marketing....and the cross selling upside – huge! So keep those lists up to date