

Marketing & PR

Promotion

There is loads of stuff out there on marketing and publicity. In this section we are looking at promotion in the context of being jazz musician. There are promotional tools that are important to have in your armoury but also it's important to remember that your key area of promotion is when you are on stage. Are you and your musicians rehearsed, do you have an agreed set list and all know what you are playing, do you arrive on stage on time or do you keep the audience waiting, do you speak to the audience, do you have records for sale and invite people to join your mailing list, do you announce yourself so that people who arrive during the set know who you are. All of these things are promotion and give out messages as to who you are and where you sit in the jazz universe and on your own trajectory.

This section looks at developing your promotional pack and EPK (electronic press kit), developing your website with download potential and running a digital marketing campaign.

Developing a promotion pack

Look at the tools that you need and how best to develop them. Like everything in life you can have the Rolls Royce of promotion packs or you can have a more modest model that does the same job and have the same components but maybe isn't quite as all singing and all dancing as another model. In this section we will outline the key components of different parts of the promotional tools that you are likely to need – the packaging that you decide to put around them will be determined by your needs, budget and taste. For more information about marketing you can download the Jazz Marketing and PR pdf or the Musician and the Internet pdf from the website.

Here are the key components of a demo/promo/press kit – often this is available in paper form and it's useful to have it available as an EPK - electronic press kit, particularly for overseas work. The leaders in this area are Sonicbids and most promoters, press people are familiar with their website. <http://www.sonicbids.com>.

Key components of a promo pack

- Attractive creatively designed folder or similar to put it all in
- Covering letter – a letter of introduction to the person who you are sending the kit to
- Biography – which includes – introductory statement, summary of current project, additional information, background of artist/band; elaboration of any other key information, ending paragraph
- Fact sheet – one page long only! Point out key information on the artist/band from the bio
- A photograph - at the top of my list is photographs – ask yourself do you have a good photograph that is easily accessible available for promotional use (free of charge) and an interesting image that press and venue publicity officers will find irresistible to use.
- Press clippings – a maximum of 2 or 3 sheets of photocopied reviews
- Quote sheet – six of seven positive quotes from music professionals about your music
- CD/CDR – three or four of your best songs
- CD/CDR cover – a well designed cover with song titles, artiste name, copyright and contact/information, production credits.
- Options – video, business card, lyric sheet, itinerary information, equipment list

Building A Website

How to build an effective website with downloads

You can design a web site so consumers can find it quickly, navigate it easily, find the product they're looking for, sample it quickly, buy it securely and recommend the whole experience to someone else with ease and incentive. As a trader assume that all consumers have a zero second patience threshold when online....we're all consumers so ask yourselves what you like about other sites and why - and more importantly what you don't like about other sites and why.

You can find good developers by looking at web sites you like and searching for the "powered by" link which is normally at the bottom of the page or in the about section. The go to their web site.

Good developers will have a large portfolio of like-minded clients available to see on their site. This is also good news for you because good developers also file and reuse their web site templates to customers who don't want to spend too much money and don't mind a site that's redesigned from an existing template.

If you don't have much money (eg: £300-£500) you might be able to persuade a good developer to reconfigure the font and colour scheme of an existing template and then send them a well written site map with all your content so its easy for them to upload it and get it made.

A good site map means a 3-4 page documents that literally has headings like HOME PAGE, REVIEWS, SHOP, ABOUT and then the exact text that you want under each section (developers don't write, they develop, so don't expect them to). The more detail a developer has from you the less time he needs to develop and the less changes he needs to make – and time and changes = £££)

Myspace – Myspace.com is great for self-promotion, and building a musician network. It's quick, easy, effective, vast, interlinked and multi-purpose and works well along side your own website. As of 2011, MySpace has seen its place in the social networking market reduced in importance, but it remains a useful (and free) tool for musicians.

Key elements to consider when building a web site are:

- **The right name.** Choose a clear and succinct url (www.jazzservices.org.uk). Keep it as simple as possible and avoid misspelling a name just so you can have it sound like the name when you say it. Search engines like to find names and if they can't find your name because you misspelled it then it simply won't find it with the result that less people will find you.
- **Clear navigation.**
- **Registration.** Give your visitors an incentive to give you their name and email address. This could be through a backstage area membership with a free track, a video, an exclusive remix, a podcast interview, a competition, a signed CD and poster, numbered limited edition album artwork prints, etc etc.
- **Quick loading samples.** Keep audio and video samples Kbps light, easy to find, quick to load and fast to reselect. Test this when it's up and running off numerous PCs and Macs via friends and at Internet cafes before you start spreading the word.
- **A streaming audio player.** Your home page (and other pages) can contain an embedded audio player that streams your tracks while the consumer browses. This offers you a good self-marketing platform without threatening your download sales. The stream cannot be downloaded and the streamed content can be clipped versions of each song as opposed to full versions. In addition you can title each track and embed a link behind each title that clicks through to the track available for sale as a download.
- **Reviews and live dates.** When you get them put them into the site and link them to the venue site or the review site (magazine, fanzine, paper or TV/Radio show). If you do, email the reviewer or listing agent and ask them if they'll do the same and link back to you from their site. Not all will but every one that does is another free signpost out there towards your site. Always look to maximize the amount of external links on other sites to your site. Do this forever, all the time.
- **The download shop.** You can either do this on your own or for around £200 set up or do it for free with other sites that will do it for you and them just link to them. Here's how to do both:
 - **Doing-it-yourself** – Go to someone like www.emusu.com and pay them to set you up on their download store system that looks like your site, feels like your site and never breaks down but is actually their system fulfilling your download sales.
 - **Using an aggregator** – Another way is to go to a site like www.uploader.com or IODA Alliance who will take your content and ensure that it's repurposed across all their digital retail clients from iTunes to hundreds of other independent music retail outlets. This may include a set up fee and, as with all the others, a percentage of each sale.
 - **Free tools** – Just as good in many ways are the web sites like www.tunetribes.com and www.bandwagon.com (and others out there) who will create an artist profile page for you on their web site that includes your tracks for download. You can then link your web site to the page through their branded store buttons that you can place on your store page next to the audio sample icon. They click on it and your profile page immediately opens up in a new window one click away to purchase.

Online Promotion

The Internet has revolutionized the independent music industry no matter what genre and now, more than ever, the DIY ethic of music distribution and marketing plays an essential role in reaching, maintaining and growing a targeted fan base.

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.

Digital music distribution

See above in the web site section for a more detailed breakdown but you can either digitize your content and give it away for free as MP3s on your site, pay a company like Emusu to create and manage your own download store, or do non-exclusive deals with as many download providers as you can who offer free upload and service with a %age of sale per download accounted monthly or quarterly (ie: Tune Tribe, Bandwagon, IODA, Uploader, etc).

You can also explore some of the major labels, who all have digital departments, as they may do a label deal with you to get all your content and future releases on to iTunes, Napster and some of the bigger players for a percentage in addition to the percentage taken by iTunes etc. This can have its benefits in the early stages of a label because your content does get on to iTunes etc quickly but later on, when the label has grown more, you may wish to deal directly with the big stores in which case keep the deal with the major label annual and under review.

Copyright cleared promotional photos

Digitize the photos you want to use and upload them on to the web site – some for consumer use and some for press use only. For press use only create a password protected page of the site that has a separate url (www.jazzservices.org.uk/press). Once there the journalist can input a username and password unique to them and access an entire electronic press kit (EPK) that just sits there being updated by you as and when. This can include press release, high and low resolution photos, full length review tracks, video clip interviews, band logos, album art work etc.

Video and Podcasts

Sites such as Youtube are incredibly popular. Not only can you upload your music videos for all to see and link to you can add any sort of video (within reason) so if you’re in the studio creating new music take an hour out and home video some acoustic versions of your tracks and the band mucking around so you have lots of additional video material that fans love later on.

The same goes for podcasts which are audio programmes made available for free to iPod users via the podcast site. When recording, or after, conduct an audio interview with the artist/s and play a few clips of tracks and additional acoustic noodlings and then assemble it all into a 20-45 minute audio programme that can be uploaded for free on to www.podcast.org and made available to anyone with an iPod. The trick, after it’s there, is to link it to and from your fans as you would any new piece of worthy band information.

Digital Marketing campaign

A digital marketing campaign for your release can be a free / low cost and reasonably easy exercise in the beginning for an artist.

It entails you making a list of all the online Jazz lifestyle and fanzine sites that you can find. Then do the same for similar genres (blues, folk, acoustic, rnb, swing, bluegrass, country etc). Then, when your site is ready and working, send out the CD / press release to each site for review. When the reviews come in cut and paste them into your review section, link to their sites from yours and vice versa, and then tell your fans about the reviews and ask them to do the same.

Also offer each site the same track of yours as a free download or stream on their audio player / lifestyle chart that they might have on their homepage. They love that and will promote you more by using it.

Include free digital banners or buttons with the CD / press release if you have them as some sites may include it with a review. If you do this remember to ask them to embed the url for your home page behind the button or banner so when people click on it your site comes up.

Do the same thing with other exclusive content like podcasts or video interviews.

Beyond that there are numerous digital marketing companies who will do the same thing for you and take a fee but in addition the good ones will ensure that your buttons, banners, photos, reviews, exclusives and free downloads all make the home pages of major and independent retail and lifestyle websites at the same time. This is where campaigning becomes an art form in its own right and a good example of such a company would be Hyperlaunch based in Bristol although there are several other big players.

Shop for them as you would anything else of worth to you...shortlist a few, visit, compare, request references, value price over service and see if you can agree performance benchmarks to the service promised then go for it. It's all risk remember – just try to minimize your risk to reward ratio as much as you can at every turn.

E mailing lists and fans

Your email lists and the means to keep in contact with your fans are central to developing an audience and being attractive to promoters, record companies and agents. Nowadays the emphasis is on what's called 'permission marketing' – here is a little background and explanation of what these terms mean.

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.