

BAND TIPS: Bandtips Promoters by Karl Geraghty



FirstMusicContact

YOU'RE A BAND:

There are 4 options really:

1. Rent the venue. If you're confident you can pull a crowd then put your money where your mouth is. Speak to the venue and see what's included in the rent. Do they have a PR person employed that can help promote the show? Does it cost more to rent on a weekend and is that worth it? (ie, if it's €100 extra and you're charging €5 – will you get an extra 20 people on a Friday instead of a Saturday)
2. Get on the bill of a new band or showcase night. This is a chance to show the venue/promoter that you can bring a crowd so make sure you drag your mates/family/co-workers etc. along. If you show that you're worth 30 or 40 punters on a weeknight you're more likely to get support slots.
3. Support slots. These are usually chosen by whoever is renting the venue, ie the promoter or headline act. Target specific shows and do the research – don't expect others to do it for you. I could spend a whole day replying to bands about who is promoting this show, where to get in touch with that band etc. but I don't have the time. If you want the slot bad enough do the leg work.
4. Get paid. Once you've proven that you can bring a crowd you'll be in a position to negotiate a deal with the venue or promoter. This could involve a door split after cost or a fee vs a percentage. This will only happen after you've proven you can put bums in seats though.

YOU'RE A PROMOTER:

Do the research before confirming the show. Is there another gig on that night that might detract from yours? How many people paid in to see your headliner at their last show in your town? What was the ticket price? Is there a new album coming out before the show? Have they got someone doing PR?

Do agree a budget in advance. Make sure the band/agent/manager know the logic behind your offer. Include money for advertising, (and how it will be spent) a rider, a soundman etc. Don't forget to deduct any ticket charges, VAT and IMRO.

Do keep posters (especially the smaller ones) as simple as possible. There's no point in trying to put too much information in or getting too fancy and not being able to read it from a distance or not having it jump out at people walking by. All you're trying to do is let people know that band A is playing on date B in venue C. If your poster works they'll find out where to get tickets, what the band's website is, the address of the venue, when the album is out, what time doors are at etc. And make sure the headline act's name is big and easy to read! The bottom line is the poster is there to draw attention to the gig and not give you every piece of info about it.

Do Communicate. So many of the little problems that can end up in arguments on the day can be avoided by making sure production manager A has spoken to soundman B. What time is everyone arriving in the venue? Do the band want seats brought in? What time is the curfew? Is there someone to sell merch? Small issues easily dealt with in advance that can needlessly cause grief on the night.

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Don't put on that band. (again) Too often you see bands playing on a nearly weekly basis and watering down their audience. As a promoter you need to make sure you know what other shows the bands are playing. With money tight, this is more important than ever – no one benefits from a poorly attended show.

Don't pull punches about ticket sales. Let the artist representatives know how pre-sales (if you're doing them) are going. If you're expecting the majority of tickets to be sold on the door – tell them that. If the show isn't doing as well as you expected, let them know this and see how you can work together and change this.

Don't forget to say thanks. Now that your show has been such a success you'll want to do another show with the band. Following up a successful show will help you build good relationships, not just with the band you've just promoted but with other bands represented by the same agent/manager etc.

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