

## **HOW TO EFFECTIVELY PROMOTE YOUR BAND'S GIGS IN BOSTON (and in other markets)**

Greetings Bands/Artists, Dan Millen here. As a talent buyer / Promoter, I get tons of questions on how to effectively promote your band. I've developed this document to assist you and myself in developing YOUR band.

Please check your ego and rely on the years of practice I've had. I know these nuggets of wisdom work, I've seen them work, and they'll work for you if you are ready to achieve. Remember that It is not lack of information that causes bands/artists not to achieve, it's lack of followthrough. We all have the same info, and after you read this you will be chock full of new info so now there's no excuse not to achieve results! Get ready to FOLLOWTHROUGH!

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Companion documents to this one are Bostonmedia.doc and for those of you who wish to dig a bit deeper – see the end of this document for info on getting advice you can trust, and hiring a publicist and promoter who'll get you results and not run away with your money.

### **SO – YOU'VE BOOKED A SHOW IN BOSTON, NOW WHAT?**

Before we get to actually promoting your shows, as a young band you need to understand that you must **SPACE OUT YOUR PLAYS. YOU CAN NOT PLAY THIS MARKET ONCE A WEEK OR ONCE EVERY 2 WEEKS.** By market, I mean Boston / Cambridge / Somerville / Brighton / Allston / JP – anywhere where the same group of people would be expected to go see your band. You should put 3 weeks between gigs, preferably 4+ and when you get to be a big draw you will want to put 8-12 weeks between plays. Additionally, only list THE NEXT GIG on your webpage, in your emails, and in any snail mail or press releases you put out. "But Dan, I want everyone to know we are playing a bunch of gigs" you say – tough – if you want to see a bunch of gigs listed on your webpage and in your emails, go book Worcester, providence, Burlington VT, NYC, etc. Why, you ask - If you give your fans the impression that they can just see you in a couple weeks someplace else, you'll split your draw and start to dilute each gig you play. You'll start to hear things like "Well, i just saw you last week, I was tired and I figured I'll see you guys in a couple weeks at tt's anyway..." or "I didn't wanna miss Survivor or Friends" or some other silly bullpoopy excuse like that.

You want EVERY FAN to come see you EVERY TIME you play, and therefore you MUST PROMOTE EVERY SHOW LIKE IT'S THE ONLY SHOW. We promoters know this, and there's no surer way to piss off a promoter than to play too often and dilute your market.

The principle that sums all of this up that you need to understand:

**If you do not promote your shows, nobody will come to them. If nobody comes to them, you aren't going to get another shot.**

Period, if you book a show you must do EVERYTHING WITHIN YOUR POWER TO GET PEOPLE TO PAY TO SEE YOU. From the promoter or club's point of view, you are not playing shows because you make good music, you are playing shows so that you can draw fans and sell beer and tickets for the venue. If you happen to pack the place and you are a great band as well, so much the better. We always hope that's the case, but it ain't always, so get over yourself and understand that this is a business. The business is fueled by tickets and booze. Get this ingrained in your head, and your shows will be a lot more successful and you'll start getting more of them.

What does doing Everything within your power to get people to pay to see you entail?

## 1. Personal interaction with friends and fans

- a. You and all of your band members must become **SHAMELESS SELF PROMOTION MACHINES**. Invite everyone you know and bust their chops to come see your shows. Make flyers with show info on them, and hand them to total strangers, cute girls/boys, go to parties with flyers in hand, go to other shows at the venue you are playing and talk with fans of other bands. Get creative. People will think you are cool because you play in a band and you are playing a cool club where people want to go. (note – do not openly pass out flyers for another venue inside a competing venue, it's tacky and shows a lack of class, most places will kick you out for that, so don't do it)
- b. **TEASER DISCS** – One of the smartest things you can do for your band is to take your 2 or 3 best songs and burn a huge quantity of teaser cds. They are cheap and really effective. Make sure you put your webpage and contact info on every one of them. You may as well use them as demos. Carry 8 or 10 of them with you wherever you go, with a show flyer inserted in the sleeve, c'mon, this is what being a shameless self promoter is all about. Send 50 of them to every venue you are playing with show info marked on them or flyers inserted in them for your upcoming show. Joe or Jane at the club grabs one, takes it home, likes what she hears and winds up at your show. Ding Ding you won!
- c. **EMAIL** – send all your friends and fans regular email announcements about upcoming gigs, evites, etc. Make them hip and easy to read, and PUT EVERY LAST BIT OF INFO ABOUT THE SHOW. Age time cover, club address etc... don't assume that people know where the club is. Always put your band name in the subject line so that they know whom it's from. Otherwise people will think it's spam and delete it.
- d. **GET YOUR FANS TO WORK FOR YOU** – Develop 'fan reps' – offer your most committed fans free admission to your shows in exchange for passing out flyers in their dorms, to their friends etc. Give them all teaser cds, have them post messages on other band's message boards, have them email mp3s to their friends – get a cult of personality brewing to help push you forward. This is powerful shit if you can get it happening. Someplace in each of your emails should be a "Do you wanna help out" section with info on how to get in touch with you to become a fan rep. Guster is a classic example of a band who developed the fan rep system across the nation and built it into a huge career. This works for ALL STYLES OF MUSIC, so don't give me that "we're nothing like Guster" crapola.

## 2. THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF SHOW PROMOTION

- a. **POSTERS/FLYERS/TEASERS AND OTHER PROMO MATERIAL** – Make a powerful, goodlooking poster and send a dozen of them to the venue with your date marked on them (the guy putting the posters up may not be the guy who booked the date, so don't assume he has the right info, put the date on your posters before you send them), along with flyers and teaser discs – THERE IS NO GREATER WAY TO SAY TO A CLUB THAT YOU CARE ABOUT PACKING THEIR ROOM THAN BY SENDING THEM PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS AS SOON AS YOU CONFIRM THE SHOW!
- b. **POSTERING** – Bear in mind that it is unlawful in the city of Boston and Cambridge to stick your posters up on public property and nonsanctioned private property, punishable by a \$300 fine per incident which you will surely pay. BUT – There are plenty of legal locations, record stores, coffee shops, lifestyle locations where you can put posters up, leave flyers and teasers around. Do it smart and do it legal.
- c. **PRESS** – Being a young band, it's less than likely that you will get top notch press in the Boston Globe, Herald, or Phoenix, but there are many outlets for

getting press (see bostonmedia.doc) and as you grow, your pressworthiness will grow with you so you want to start early in getting the press to know you - Ask the promoter/booking agent for their Media List and work it! When working press, make sure you have an electronic bio, color jpegs, high resolution, and have it easily accessible – many bands do this by posting them up on their webpages, a very good idea. Be patient and don't let those press bastards get you down, be cool if you get rejected, but keep bugging them for lovin.

- d. **RADIO** – See bostonmedia.doc - Boston has a ton of college radio stations that will play your music – in addition – depending on what style of music you play – many commercial stations like WBCN, WFNX, WBOS, WXRV, and WAAF have local and unsigned band specialty shows. The DJs who host those shows are very selective about what they play, so make sure your demo is good before you send. If your demo sounds like crap, chances are you won't get love. Do some research and know what shows you are pitching to, you don't wanna send a metal CD to the folk show. DJ's like it when you listen to their shows, so if you know what they are spinning, makes you look cool. You should encourage the stations who are spinning your music to give away tickets to the show in exchange for plugging it on the air, and see if they'll let you on the air for an interview or a call in. Tell them you want to "support the stations that support your band", that always closes the deal..

I'm sure there's a few things I missed, but these are the basics, if you put the work in to get all of the above going for yourself, especially if you begin to apply the basic principles to all the other markets you play in, you will begin to see dramatic changes in the amount of fans who show up to see you at every show, the quality of shows you get will increase, and you'll begin to see a financial reward as well.

SO GET CRACKIN', and - MAY ALL YOUR ROCK N' ROLL DREAMS COME TRUE!

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Dan Millen  
RockOn! Concerts – Making Rock n' Roll Dreams Come True!  
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If you are interested in checking out our always expanding Boston Media List, please send an email to the above address with "Please Send Me Your Media List" in the subject line. Please don't send your life story along with it though.

The following are LOCAL BOSTON companies that I take great pleasure in recommending. I have no problem attaching my name and reputation to these recommendations because I work closely with these companies and I know they GET RESULTS.

**AUTOMATED BOOKING AND PROMOTION THAT WILL MAKE EVERYTHING I HAVE SAID ABOVE EASY AS PIE!** Onlinegigs is an incredibly powerful tool for musicians, agents, record companies and managers. This subscription service will virtually automate the administration of booking and promoting your band or bands. With features such as: A huge directory of music industry contacts, the ability to track correspondences with each contact, schedule reminders for important follow ups, print labels, issue contracts, automatically update any website with gig information, automatically have a tour itinerary with driving directions generated, and issue press releases to the local media in any market in the country. <http://www.onlinegigs.com>

**HIRE SOMEONE TO HELP YOU GET YOUR POOP TOGETHER:**

**ATTN: Developing artists and aspiring music business people-** Are you onto something good and in need of advice you can trust? Ask the people you already know! **MWGlobal Artist Development** is a BOSTON BASED music business consultation firm, whose associates have PROVEN success in the industry and SPECIALIZE in cultivating talent. We'll give you the tools you need to get the edge you seek. The rates are reasonable and the returns are priceless! Send an email to [dan@rockonconcerts.com](mailto:dan@rockonconcerts.com) with "Please send me Consulting Info" in the subject if you wanna know more.

**PUBLICITY AND RADIO PROMOTION FROM A NAME YOU CAN TRUST** – Guys, I can't tell you how many times a Publicist has taken my money and ran and gotten me and my bands nothing. The right PR campaign is crucial. I've gotten hundreds of solicitations from unscrupulous radio promoters promising me commercial airplay or charting on CMJ and heard horror stories from bands who've blown their lifesavings on unrealistic radio campaigns. Powderfinger Promotions is a full service PR/Radio company specializing in helping Indie Bands get their name and music out there. I've worked with them on several projects and I know they GET RESULTS or they won't take your money. If you are interested in finding out more, send an email to [dan@rockonconcerts.com](mailto:dan@rockonconcerts.com) with "Powderfinger Info" in the subject.

**GRAPHICS AND LOGO DESIGN THAT WILL KNOCK YOU OUT WITHOUT KNOCKING OUT YOUR WALLET** - Alphabet Arm Design is a full service design studio who's focus is unique, creative & distinctive design solutions for a variety of clients & industries, although has built a niche market specializing in music-based design; CD Art Direction, Logo design for bands, musicians & record labels, Tour Poster design, Merchandise design, etc. Plenty of samples online @ [www.alphabetarmdesign.com](http://www.alphabetarmdesign.com)

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