

BAND TIPS: D.I.Y. GIG BOOKING TIPS by Tim Sweeney



FirstMusicContact

(This article is written with a USA context in mind, but all the info is transferable to Ireland and the Europe)

"My band seems to have this ongoing discussion, (more like an argument), about how many times a month we should be playing in our home town. Friends in other bands tell us not to play in town more than twice a month. According to them, we will "burn out our fans." But I think they are wrong and we should play as much as we can. What's the right answer?"

The answer to this ongoing question is to try to play in your home market between 2-4 times a month. But instead of just leaving you with that thought, lets explore the answer so you can have a full understanding of why this is the right number.

As I have always preached, your career needs to be anchored on your live shows and it needs to start in your home market. Especially since your live shows and the "proper" pre-show promotion will be 75% of all your future sales.

Your home market needs to be a large metropolitan city near you or that you are living in, that preferably has over 1 million people living there. If not, focus on the largest metropolitan city in your state that has at least 500,000 people. With that in mind, lets get down to business.

Artists will quickly say, "don't play more than a couple times a month because you will burn out your mailing list." They are right! If your primary focus for promoting your next show is to merely let your mailing list know, then it is true, your existing fans will get tired of being promoted to. Especially if they have come to a couple of your shows in the past and have bought your CD. You can bet they are "burnt out" by your ongoing requests for them to come to your future shows.

Most artists do not think creatively when promoting their next show. They make the mistakes of handing out flyers instead of sample tapes or sample CDs, or spending hundreds of dollars on a newspaper or magazine advertisements, that no one can hear their music through. So lets start from scratch.

Lets use Los Angeles as the major market that you live in. LA itself is approximately 90 miles in size (counting in the smaller cities around it). This is important to know because of the following reasons:

Creating the sample tapes and CDs, doing your market research on the targeted areas around the club, where your potential fans hang out and shop, allowing for the time to hand out the 200-300 tapes or CDs minimum, you are going to need to generate new fans. Plus the extra time, you will need to "redesign" the club for your show. If you find that you can do a couple of shows in the South part of your city and 1 or 2 in the North, East or West and adequately promote them, you can consider 4 to 6 shows per month.

Keep in mind that your city is a big place with over a million people. You are not going to get the same people at your next show, unless you invite them. Even though your city may seem limited in places to play, or even geographically on the map, don't let your mind become "limited" on what's available to you.

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Tim Sweeney is head of Tim Sweeney & Associates, an artist development company based in Temecula, California. His book, *The Complete Guide To Internet Promotion For Musicians, Artists & Songwriters*, has an excellent outline of exactly what a web site that generate sales should look like and what you should have in it.

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To order any of Tim Sweeneys' books, contact the FMC at 8782244

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