#### NOTES AND GUIDANCE

# PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Firstly let's look at a range of promotional activities you can undertake to promote yourself or your product. You should read the previous chapter 3 on Marketing first.



#### **FLYERS**

A flyer is a promotional tool used by promoters who are advertising a gig or club night, a bar promotion or to describe a service. Most promoters will generate between 5000 and 10000 flyers and would usually employ a small team to distribute them in bars, clubs and other places where an audience might be.



Information on the flyer should include times, venue, price, any price breaks, sponsors logo if appropriate, and a contact number or website.



#### **VIDEOS**

Used as a tool to promote your music on television and as an enhancement on some CD releases and in DVD format as a sales format. Quite a few satellite and cable music channels now play videos from unsigned artists, providing the quality is up to scratch.



#### **POSTERS**

Posters are a valuable and cost effective way in which to advertise an event or product. They should carry similar information as that contained on a flyer. You would employ a poster team to post a local area, as well as getting posters up in venues you have a relationship with. The distribution of posters can be pricey, and it can also be illegal in certain areas.



Find out if somebody you know is connected with a college or university (a good place to promote your event) and think about other places your customers go. Its not unusual to see posters in takeaways and public libraries.



#### DJ MAILOUTS

This involves mailing an advance copy of a release to 'Taste Makers' (DJ's who have a reputation for breaking new music) along with a DJ response form. The DJ would normally return some information based on the progress and audience response to the track. This helps the record label to look at the general response across the UK when deciding how much stock it should be manufacturing. You can pay companies to do this for you, but you can also build your own database of tastemaker DJ's.



#### RADIO PROMOTION

You can pay a professional radio promoter called a 'Plugger' who will take your release, perhaps one month early, to DJ's and producers to try and get radio airplays for the release. The pluggers ultimate job is to get you on the stations 'Playlist'. This mean that the record will be played on a rotation in different shows. This can make or break the record.



#### TV PROMOTION

As above, the Plugger will take the media pack (recording, images and video) to television in order to gain as much exposure for the artist ahead of and during the life of a record release.



#### **IN-STORE PROMOTION**

This involves anything from having a display presence in a major store to the artist appearing at the store to play a live performance or to sign stock for the general public.



#### **TELES ALES**

This involves a team of staff working on behalf of the distributor and calling retailers to tell them about a release and achieve advance orders. They may offer incentive deals to the store and even play the record down the phone. The telesales team will need information about the progress with DJ's in the clubs, Radio and TV and any press or advertising, in order to influence the buyer at a store.



#### PRESS AND MEDIA

This involves chasing features and reviews in the music press and tabloids. You would pay a PR (Public Relations) person to do this, and they might also buy adverts, advertorial (a combination of an advert and some editorial text) and may even incentivise the press with competition prizes and giveaways. See more on the Press and Media later in this chapter.



#### STREET TEAM

This involves a group of people involved in distributing flyers, posters and promotional material on a regional or national basis, often based around the dates of a tour or record release.



#### **TOURING**

Timing the dates of a tour is an integral part of promoting a release. Radio and TV pluggers would liaise with the artist's Tour Manager who would organise any other promotional activity for the act whist visiting a town or city. For example, conducting radio or TV interviews, a local press feature or a store visit.



#### RINGTONES

Ringtones now actually outsell singles and you can make great use of this technology to sell product, create databases of fans, promote products using mass Text messaging. Ringtones are now available in a variety of formats including ringtone (mono) polyphonic (stereo) Puretone/Realtone (actual music/video) and can improve an artists income.



#### WEB ACTIVITY

As the web is a major tool for promoting and selling product, record companies will actively promote the artist in a number of ways using the internet and creating and utilising a database of fans to sell new releases, merchandise, downloads, ringtones and gig tickets.



- Targeted email blasts
- Notice boards and forums
- 'My Space' is a current popular site for musicians
- Links with related websites, either in your area or nationally for followers of the same type of music



Look for more links to digital distributors and music community websites in chapter 5



#### **DOWNLOADS**

Using the internet, you can sell your music and promote your product and gigs. You have two opportunities with downloads to qualify for chart positions. One is the official download charts which is based purely in the sales of downloads. Two is the combined UK sales chart which is a based on a combination of actual traditional physical format sales (CD's or Vinyl) released to the public and actual purchased downloads.

NOTES AND GUIDANCE 61

# THE MEDIA

The parts of the media that are of interest to musicians and performers are:



RADIC



**TELEVISION** 



**PUBLISHING** 

i.e. books, newspapers and magazines

#### RADIO

Radio is immensely important as a means of promoting music.

Radio is made up of community, local, national and international stations. Other formats now include satellite and cable broadcasting, digital audio broadcasting (DAB) and broadcasts using the Internet. Stations are often identified by the types of music they play.

National radio broadcasters currently include stations such as BBC Radio 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Live, Classic FM, Virgin Radio and Talk Sport. There are hundreds more local or regional radio stations across the UK.

Community and Hospital radio station have special licences to broadcast locally in their area. They are often a good way to get into radio. There are also temporary licences available for radio stations that need to broadcast for a short period of time, for example over a festival.

Pirate radio stations broadcast illegally (without a licence) but are very popular in inner city areas, with many underground artists getting their first exposure this way.

Commercial radio stations are funded through advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The BBC is funded by a licence fee paid for by its viewers and listeners.

Digital radio stations need a DAB radio to pick them up. There are a variety of music, sport and talk channels. Some of the current digital music stations include Smash! Hits, Kiss100, Q, MOJO Radio, Kerrang! Radio and BBC 6 Music. You can also pick many of these channels up on satellite and cable TV.

Many radio stations often broadcast on the Internet too, so you can pick them up anywhere in the world providing you have broadband internet access. Examples include BBC Radio and many stations across America and Europe.

# How do you get your music played?

You need to get on the playlist!

The playlist is crucial to the success of your recorded music. Not only do you gain a royalty (if you are the writer) every time your music is broadcast on a licenced station, it also helps to promote your product.

Playlists are created according to the music policy of the radio station. This is the type of music that a station normally programmes, for example pop, rock, dance, easy listening, jazz, classical, gold, underground, Rn B etc.

National stations such as BBC Radio 1 generally only playlist signed artists who have current chart activity. However, other stations such as BBC 1Xtra play a lot of unsigned music.

The music for the playlists is often chosen in production meetings, or sometimes through listener research.

Most record companies employ the services of promotion companies (Pluggers) to get their products added to the playlists.

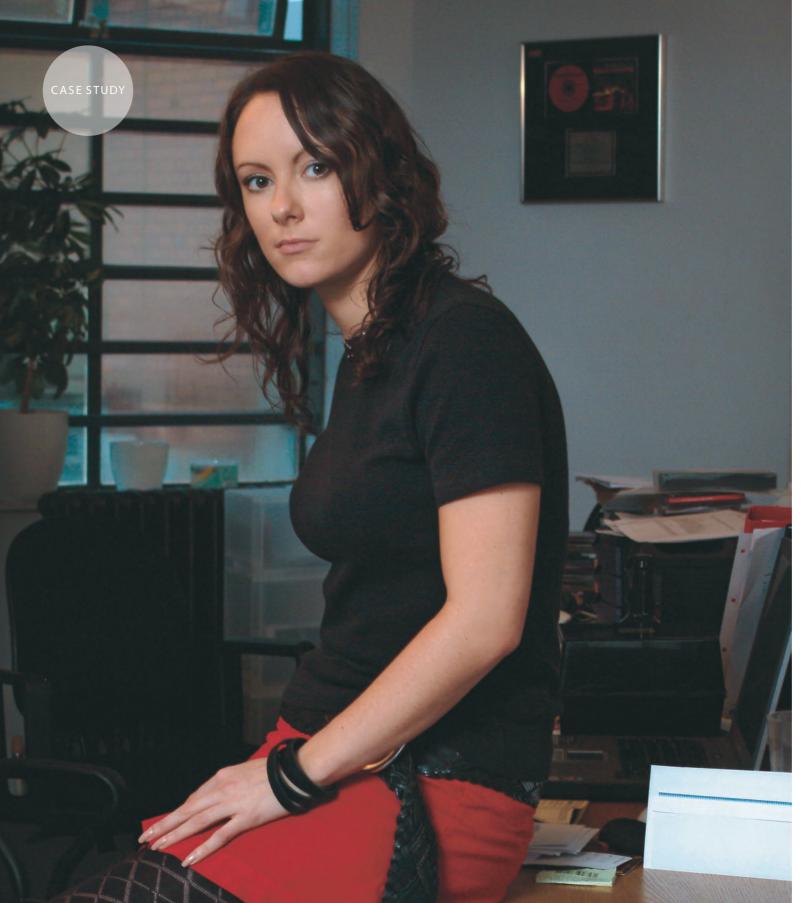
Local stations generally show more interest in local talent. An interview and session could attract many new fans. Your local independent radio station is a valuable source of exposure, particularly in the early days of your music career.

The important contact to make is the producer, if you want an interview, session or performance. To find out the names of producers simply ring the station.

An alternative is to use directories like Music Week, the media directory or the Unsigned Guide.

Your local radio station is the one to start with initially as many of your potential fans are likely to be listeners too. Target both the presenter and producer. It won't do any harm! Remember an effective press release and package is a key to success.

NOTES AND GUIDANCE 63



# KELLY Radio and TV promotions

I manage the day-to-day running of Red Alert Music Promotions, Management & Consultancy

Red Alert is a radio and TV promotions company. Basically, we are employed by record labels to gain exposure for their artists. This involves gaining airplay for single and album releases and also setting up competitions and interviews with radio stations to increase exposure further.

More recently, Red Alert has moved into the area of artist management. Our current artist roster comprises of up and coming artists, so as well as making management decisions and looking after their diaries, we're also booking gigs for them and talking to the press. Aside from this, we also have a couple of record labels, Too Nice Recordings and Random Recordings, which are being used mainly as platforms from which to launch our management artists.

I manage a team of people and try to ensure we're all moving in the right direction and getting results, meeting targets and achieving deadlines. I report back to Liam the MD, but we are both very 'hands on' within the company. We both plug records, liaise with radio contacts and record manufacturers, and also stuff envelopes for mailouts!

What typical things might you do in a week?

Every week can vary massively dependent on what's happening within the various campaigns we're working on at the time. The more mundane side of the job involves lots of mailouts, and then follow-up phone calls to our contacts to persuade them that they should be supporting our records. We also visit stations regularly, as it's always more effective to speak to people face-to-face. We also travel around the country on promotional trips, taking our artists into radio stations for interviews and live sessions. And we attend gigs all around the UK, taking key radio contacts to shows, and also looking after interviews on the tour. Our job can involve a lot of travelling! We make weekly reports to the record labels, detailing how the campaigns are progressing, and have regular meetings with labels in London.

On the management side of things my role involves liaising with the bands themselves and also with A&R people, promoters, photographers, designers, etc. On the label front, I spend a lot of time speaking to manufacturers, designers, collection societies such as the PPL, and record shops.

It's not a nine to five job. We go to lots of gigs in the evenings and at weekends, and spend many nights away from home.





#### **TELEVISION**

Television exposure can create huge sales, but for musicians in the early stages of their career it is the most difficult type of media to penetrate.

BBC stations are paid for by a licence fee. Commercial terrestrial channels in the UK include ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5. With the advent of Satellite and cable, many hundreds of new channels are now available, including specialist Music channels such as MTV, VH1, Smash Hits, Music Choice, The Box, Kerrang!, Q and Kiss. There have never been more media channels to promote your music across.

Similar to radio, there are specialist TV pluggers who promote your music to TV channels. However, this can be an expensive process.

### How do you get your music on television?

It's difficult to get TV exposure in the early stages of your career. You need to look for any small opportunities at all and seize them with both hands.

Making a simple video is a very useful start, as it shows people how you look and perform. Find a local college with a video or multimedia course, and see if the students will make a video for you – it's good experience for them and it won't cost you much.

If your video is good enough, you may be able to get it played on some of the smaller satellite and cable TV music channels, or on local community TV shows.

Watch out for opportunities to get exposure on regional TV, for example the local evening news reports.



#### **PUBLISHING**

This includes the printed media such as local and national newspapers and magazines, as well as books.

If you want to get 'column inches' in the newspaper or a specialist music magazine, you will have to accurately target a press release to them. Information about new acts, writers, performers, musicians, club events is sent out to the media each day and you will need to become part of this process to get exposure.

#### The press release

A press release is an information package for journalists and news editors, with the usual objective being to get free publicity. It must be typed or word-processed, written in a coherent manner in a language appropriate to that target audience.

The professional press release should contain, preferably within a single page, the following points:

#### 1

## A strong introduction containing the mainselling 'angle'

The introduction is the most important section and the first sentence must get the attention of the news editor.

#### 2.

### A polished summary of the facts

The angle should be followed by interesting facts which have a 'read-on' quality.

(Try reading articles about musicians and artists in local papers to see how they have been written. Watch out for the cringeworthy headlines)

# 3. Substantiation of the contents

Ask yourself – is this interesting and relevant to the target market and the story? If not, leave parts out. There is nothing worse than a dull press release. To add to this story, the act might include its line-up and any media or forthcoming record release information. Supporting Evidence could, for instance, feature details of the event, a comment or quote from a supporting journalist or DJ, a flyer or ticket.

#### 4.

# A possible photo-opportunity (or supply a photograph for use)

You should suggest what might make a good picture (or photo-opportunity). Alternatively, include a good quality photograph.

## 5.

#### Contact names and numbers

Your contact names and numbers should be available at all times.



Be contactable to avoid missing a vital chance. Leave whatever means you have for being contacted. This could be day and evening telephone numbers, mobile phone details, e-mail addresses and fax numbers.

#### Use quotes

e.g. 'This band is the best thing I have seen all year' – The editor – XZY magazine.

# How do you send the press release, and who do you send it to?

You should send your press releases either to the News Desk, News Editor or a music journalist who you know or have researched.

Always follow up a press release. Call and ask politely if they are considering the use of your story and if need be, remind the relevant person of the salient points of your story.

If you are targeting your local paper, it is not unusual to target more than one reporter. Some reporters will be freelance and you may be lucky enough to catch the attention of a music specialist. (Some journalists prepare a story and feed it to many papers/magazines, often referred to as 'stringing')

You can send a press release by:

- Royal Mail (Actually posted to the newspaper).
- A Fax Blast (By faxing the release to one or a string of newspapers and magazines). This convenient method also allows you to track the effectiveness of your mail-shot using the fax report which identifies sent and failed items.
- E-Mail Blast (A common format now used by many). Using the internet, you are able to list many contacts into your e-mail address book and can 'globally' mail hundreds of journalists and newsdesks. You can update news on a regular basis and send out mail in seconds.

NOTES AND GUIDANCE 69

# EXAMPLE PRESS RELEASE



Look at press stories for angles.
Use your research skills, see workbook 1
Why not try mailing a draft to a local newspaper
journalist for advice and a response. (unless you try,
you may never know!)



2 Cromford avenu Manchester M1 15SH

fax \*\*\*\* - \*\*\*\* fax \*\*\*\* mobile \*\*\*\* - \*\*\*\* contact@leverstreet.com

#### PRESS RELEASE

## LEVER STREET

Four piece band LEVER STREET are currently taking the local music scene by storm and will be playing a prestigious slot at the Victoria Park music festival on Saturday 4th August, alongside big name acts such as (artist name) and (artist name). Doors open at (Time).

Spotted at a local open music night, LEVER STREET played two successful opening slots for (artist name) at the Apollo, and recently brought the house down at Manchester's premier indie club night 'Oopla'. Now with professional management and a fast growing reputation amongst Manchester's musical cognoscenti, they are scheduled for a TV feature with Channel X and a performance at the UK's biggest music industry convention, 'In the City' in September.

With a cool fusion of Latin beats, sensuous vocals and funky guitar LEVER STREET are a band to look out for!

"LEVER STREET is at a whole new level - it's almost unnatural"
The Evening News

"Brought the house down with their inspired covers, they can only be described as brilliant!" Music Unsigned

www.leverstreet.co.uk

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION / PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES PLEASE CONTACT label Manager Alison Taylor.

Tel: xxxx-xxx-xxxx Fax: xxxx-xxx-xxxx Mobile: xxxxx-xxx

Email: Alison.T@leverstreet.com

70 WANT TO KNOW MORE? Go to the 'Want to know more' section in chapter 2 NOTES AND GUIDANCE 71