

## HOW TO PROMOTE A CHRISTIAN MUSIC CONCERT

Promoting a concert can be a fun and rewarding experience but doing it the right way is key! Make sure you seek advice and prayer from 4 to 6 people before you make the decision to promote a concert, then organize a committee of church and community leaders to advice and support you in organizing the event. Then follow the below guidelines with passion, perseverance, and most importantly, BE EXCITED! God is going to do big things for your community through this event!

**1. WORD OF MOUTH:** The most important thing you can do is to start a "word of mouth" campaign immediately. Once you've finalized and received a contract from the artist's booking agency, start getting announcements made in local churches (not just your own).

**2. INITIAL CALLS:** Get on the phone and call as many churches as you can (50 to 100) within 50 miles of your event and ask them to put the concert on their calendars. Usually a team of 4 to 6 people should be given this task and a list of 10 to 20 churches given to each caller. Ask if you can send posters to put up in their church to advertise the concert. **THIS IS VERY EFFECTIVE AND HELPS GET THE BUZZ GOING. DO THIS RIGHT AWAY!** The support of churches and youth pastors is vital. Call them, encourage them, and mail them (see below).

**3. WEB BASED MARKETING:** Take advantage of all web based free marketing such as Twitter, Facebook and MySpace. Setting up a Facebook event page is always a good idea, and it's free. You can also set up a Facebook ad campaign, which allows you to reach out to Facebook users within your geographical area, and can even target people by their interests. For example, set up an ad to be shown to people in your area who like Christian music, Christian concerts, the band you have booked, etc.

Also compile an email database and send 2 to 4 e-blasts to this list at 4 weeks, 2 weeks and 2 days before the date. Most youth pastors have a list for their youth group and parents, so convincing those in your area to forward your e-blast could be a great and inexpensive way to reach potential ticket buyers.

**4. PRINTING:** In the meantime, you want to have all your posters and flyers printed including a picture of the group, stating time, date location, and ticket price. Most artists now have a master poster design already created that you can personalize to your event. Send the posters to the churches you have already called above.

You will also need a flyer or postcard to send to a mailing list of previous concert attendees, churches and bookstores. This list can be developed over time from your concert attendees, or you can call youth pastors and see if they will email an announcement to their youth group list in an e-blast that you've prepared for them. Names of previous concert attendees can be purchased from iTickets.com.

This leads us to the next step, which is bulk mailing. This is a fundamental step of a successful concert promotion.

## THE PROMOTIONAL COUNTDOWN

### 14 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONCERT

**1. DIRECT MAIL:** Make arrangements to do a direct mail campaign. You should try to mail to as many churches as possible in order to saturate your market (MORE IS BETTER). If you do not have a substantial list for your area, there are two major companies who offer church lists for purchase – Williams Direct ([www.churchladies.com](http://www.churchladies.com)) and American Church Lists ([www.americanchurchlists.com](http://www.americanchurchlists.com)). These companies also offer direct mail services for an additional fee, in which you would provide the mail pieces and they would take care of addressing and mailing. You can always create your own list by Googling churches in your area, which can be time consuming but is FREE, and the list you create could be very valuable for future concerts.

It is vital that your mailings arrive at least six weeks prior to the concert. When sending a mailing of this size you can usually get a bulk rate discount. Use your churches non-profit permit to get the lowest postal rate possible. You must give the post office substantial amount of time to ensure your mailing arrives on the determined schedule - remember, bulk mail usually takes two to three weeks to be fully delivered. Be sure to go talk to the Post Office first about bulk mail minimums before you mail.

**2. TICKET SALES:** Set up ticket outlets at bookstores and churches. List them on your promotional materials, and inform all outlets that you will pick up the receipts and excess tickets no later than the day before the concert. Inform your stores that even if they sell all their allotted tickets, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should they tell their customers the concert is sold out unless you personally tell them so.

Have your tickets printed. Often the cost of this will be absorbed by a local business in exchange for using their logo on the back. You might even work a deal whereby the ticket stub is used as a discount coupon for their customers. A good vendor is Trinity Communications in Fort Wayne, IN for printing tickets or iTickets.com.

**3. RADIO:** Contact the local Christian radio station about advertising. Get rates and ask for discounts and special promotion policies. Explore all public service announcements options with other radio stations and TV stations. See what other upcoming concerts they may know about or be involved with in your area.

### 8-12 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONCERT

Distribute all promotional materials and tickets to the ticket outlets. Be sure to get receipts and a carefully logged ticket manifest so proper accounting can easily be made when you collect the proceeds from their sales. If you give them 100 tickets, record the beginning and ending numbers on the tickets and get the store to sign an affidavit that states such.

### 6 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONCERT

1. Recruit or hire crew to help with concert (load-in, ushers, ticket takers, load-out). Read the rider that came with the contract - that will tell you how many loaders the band needs day of show.

2. Send announcements to all free publications (activities calendars, church bulletins, newspapers, radio, TV, cable shows, schools, youth programs, etc.).

3. Your mailing should have arrived by this time. Check with people on your list to see when they received theirs.

#### **4 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONCERT**

1. Start Christian radio advertising. You should buy 60-second spots to run four times a day Monday through Friday for at least four weeks prior to the concert. Also, have the station do a ticket give-away (about 10 pairs per station) and offer tickets to the station employees. Try and run at least 100 radio spots plus on air mentions and “giveaways”.

2. Artists radio interviews should be scheduled and approved by this time with the artist’s management.

3. Make arrangements for counseling materials to be available and plan for follow-up counseling to any attendee who makes any kind of decision for Christ. Check with local pastors who might be available for the evening or to disciple and counsel as part of your follow-up efforts if a Gospel presentation is going to be made.

#### **3 WEEKS PRIOR TO THE CONCERT**

1. Send press releases to the religion and entertainment editors of all local newspapers. Keep them short and to the point with a name and number to call for more information

2. Check tickets every three days. Redistribute tickets if necessary. No outlet should be allowed to run out of tickets if other outlets still have them.

#### **THE WEEK OF THE CONCERT**

1. Be sure that all ticket monies and/or tickets are picked up from the outlets no later than the day prior to the concert. This will give you enough time to make an accounting of all tickets sold at advance and group rates. Group rates will not be applicable at the door nor should any unpaid tickets be held at the door. It is not uncommon for people to call ask you to hold 30 tickets, and then not show up or appear with just a few people.

2. If you have not already discussed arrival times and last minute details with artist’s road manager, call him to confirm appropriate arrangements. His name and contact info is usually in the rider you received.

3. If you agreed to provide lodging, be sure to have hotel rooms reserved and prepaid in the artist’s name. There is often confusion at the desk so be sure that artist’s name is correctly spelled out, and if possible, a confirmation number is assigned and given to the road manager.

4. Have meals or food money arranged according to the contract, and be sure to follow the food guidelines provided in the rider.

### **THE DAY OF THE CONCERT**

1. Be sure that your crew will be there at the pre-determined time. The hall manager should have the building open and ready for set-up BEFORE the artist's crew arrives.

2. Brief ushers and staff on their duties at least two hours before concert time.

3. Meet with your road manager to cover details on set-up and load out as well as sound check, etc.

4. Have tables set up at the rear of the auditorium and several people available to help with sales of records and T-shirts etc.

5. Have an expense record sheet completed (door sales can be added following the concert) and receipts on hand so you can settle up quickly if the artist receives a percentages of ticket sales.

6. Meal(s) for artists and crew (see rider guidelines).

7. Prayer time with artists, crew and counselors usually takes place an hour or so prior to the concert. Doors usually open to the public 30 to 45 minutes before concert time, but always check with the road manager before opening doors.

8. Pass out mailing list cards to get the name and address of all that attended so you can send flyers to them in the future.

### **AFTER THE CONCERT**

1. Be sure that enough crewmembers are present to help artists with load out. This is REALLY important. Usually at least 10 strong bodied people are required.

2. Send thank you notes to all volunteers and counselors.

3. Pay all of your bills.