

Testimonials: Another High-Value, Pre-seller

In my experiences, most independent musicians do very little, if anything, in the interest of generating advance exposure for their upcoming new music releases. This is, most likely, due to not having a strong enough budget in most cases.

When I was writing my first music handbook fifteen years ago, I contacted a Phoenix radio music director for one of my book's interviews and asked how important advance promotion was for new music releases.

She stated that advance and pre-promotion was responsible for as much as 80% of the success and longevity of both exposure and sales for music, regardless of genre or whether the product was a major label or independent release.

That makes a lot of sense, because as much "noise" and interest that you can generate and get going *before* the actual release date, the more interest and awareness you can sustain for it during its actual release phase.

This includes advance radio airplay, advance on-air interviews, advance press coverage, sampler giveaways, and anything else that you would do to promote and publicize your music...only doing it in a PRE-phase.

"Yeah, Kenny, that's cool, but what about artists who already have a release out and are way past the pre-promotion phase?"

I'm always glad when you ask me those types of questions, as they really keep me on my toes, figuratively and literally.

Well, if you are an artist who missed the proverbial pre-promotion boat, but haven't begun manufacturing your product, I would suggest your having as many people listen to your music on a CD-R, or even better and cheaper, emailing them MP3 versions of your music in order to get their responses (and, positive ones, hopefully).

Concentrate on getting as many local, regional or national radio music directors, program directors, television personnel, or print media editors or writers to give you a simple reaction to and endorsement for your music.

You are not requesting an interview, nor a music review, so this ought to go rather quickly, particularly, if you contact people online. If you focus on getting media people to give you responses, you do not need to worry with getting their permission to use their comments, as you would with private citizens. Media personnel also, generally, present an air of respect, authority and expertise regarding what they do.

What you want to do with any (positive) media responses is include them (in small but readable) type as a part of your credits file that you give to your manufacturer, placing them (preferably) on the bottom of your front cover, or the back cover of your CD case.

Allow enough space for 3-5 brief comments, preferably, in the form of one-liners, such as:

"Hot to Trot is a slamming single." - Joe Blow, New Times A-Comin'

"Hot to Trot burned my fingers!!" - Shelly Slacker, KTUF-FM

Also, be sure to cite the media source of each comment.

Of course, you say, these are normally included in the little booklet within the case, don't you?

Well, keep in mind that, while having comments on the little booklet inside is good, it doesn't serve our *current* purpose, which is to generate and maintain potential music buyers' interest after their having been caught off guard and attracted to that great CD cover concept that you took advantage of after reading my article on it.

Now, if you are too late for the manufacturing phase, although it may tend to look slightly "tacky," depending on how you format it, take your comments and copy them on labels with adhesive backs that you can cut out and glue somewhere on your CD case.

Even better, consider using one of those little round, brightly colored stickers so that it appears more "normal" and appears as something that much of

the general public is accustomed to already.

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