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# How to promote live music

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Generator is recognised as the UK's leading music development agency. Among other projects, it runs Mapped Out, a development programme for emerging live music promoters. Here's what they say about promoting live music.

### Do...

...**research** – spending time on listening to new music, finding out which agents work with the best new talent and going to see regional shows should be a big (and enjoyable) part of being a promoter.

...**discover talent** – it is important you can spot the artists who will build you a reputation that audiences can trust. You can do this at a local level by helping to develop artists with potential but you can also bring in talent from around the country by building relationships with live agents.

...**build networks** – this is important within your locale as well as neighbouring areas. Building a relationship with artists, sound engineers, other promoters, DJs, bloggers, printers, agents, studios etc... can be hugely beneficial to your shows. Word-of-mouth is key!

...**plan** – ensure you book shows eight weeks in advance to allow effective lead-in time for your planned promotion

...**create a brand** – make sure your posters, flyers and online presence are coherent so that your brand can be instantly recognisable and related to the quality events you run.

...**find the right location** – a dedicated music venue will have most of what you need in-house and will most likely help you with planning and promoting your show. You can also consider using interesting spaces such as churches, town halls and warehouses, but make sure you get the required licences for your event.

...**use online tools** – make sure you utilise all the great online tools available to connect with the people in your area who attend live events. A central point such as a website or blog is essential to list your events, and give potential audiences vital information like ticket links, contact details and your blog about the artists performing your events.

...**make the most of digital marketing** – set up Facebook and Twitter profiles to share news and information as well as build an audience. You can also use the likes of Youtube and Soundcloud to share playlists of the music you promote. You can also make your posters interactive by using ThingLink, build online stories with Storify and send newsletters to your audience by compiling mailing lists on Mailchimp.

...**be creative** – in everything from your promotion to artist and venue selection.

**Don't...**

**...over do it** – stretching your resources and putting on too many similar shows will dilute your audience and ultimately your shows will suffer.

**...do it alone** – build a team of people who care about what you do and get them to help you with promotion, box office and stage management. Reward them with guest list tickets and great experience.

**...forget physical promotion** – posters and flyers can still be an integral part of your promotion plan, so don't totally jump ship to online only. In smaller towns you can make your mark with eye catching designs and ensure the right shops, cafes and venues are hit with your poster drops.

**...repeat yourself** – make sure you don't post the same ticket link for your event every time you use your social networks. Share videos of the artists playing or interesting news articles as well as having a conversation with your audience.

**...stop when the gig is over** – make sure you're making a noise after the show. Put photos and videos online and encourage the artists and fans to share.

**...give too many guest list tickets away** – in order to be economically sustainable make sure you are realistic but reasonable with artists and friends asking for guest list tickets to your shows. It can be a good idea, however, to offer free tickets to local press and radio who can feature your events. You can also offset a huge guest list by offering a cheap list for bands or a pound off for anyone who posts on your Facebook event page.

**About Mapped Out**

Generator makes sure emerging and more established musicians, promoters and music businesses have easy, long term access to information, skills and guidance that will help them become economically and artistically successful.

Mapped out was set up in response to an Arts Council England scoping study concluding that strong emerging talent found it almost impossible to set up their first tours because of a dearth of financially secure promoters who were willing and able to take that risk. The UK's leading live music agencies also underlined the issue.

Mapped Out links 12 towns with little existing infrastructure for live music, so audiences survive on a diet of heritage and tribute bands. Eight of the towns are among the third of local authority areas with the lowest engagement levels in the arts according to the Active People survey.

Generator works with a promoter in each town to develop their resources and skills through master classes with music industry professionals, one-to-one digital marketing support, network meetings and opportunities to shadow established promoters. It has set up a touring network, subsidising artist fees and production costs. Each year, they support participating promoters to create and co-ordinate brand ambassador groups who help them with practical audience development and marketing.