

## 110 Tips to Market Your Music

By Donna Liguria

Marketing is all the activities and processes of planning, communicating and executing a product, with a price, the promotion and the placement of an item to an end user. Your music is your product which you are then supplying to the end user - the music fan. Between you and the fan is a big space which has to be bridged. You may think that if you just get a record deal with some label, your prayers are answered and an instant bridge is built across that space. This is for the most part not how things work today.

As an aspiring indie or unsigned singer, songwriter, or a musician in a band you cannot do just a few things to promote yourself and expect success in your music career. Offline and online music promotion and marketing exposure is an ongoing process in this Do It Yourself age. Music companies are looking for artists that already have fan bases, have sold CDs, and are ready to move up to a higher level. Presented here are more than 100 tips and ideas for you to think about and tweak to get noticed, gain fans, and get heard. You have to find a way to stand above the crowd; talent alone is not enough.

Promo Tip #1 A music artist must start somewhere, that's usually locally, but it's better not to dive in without a plan. But begin you must. Create a plan with some ideas and set goals as to what you need to accomplish weekly, monthly, and yearly. Start small and make it progressive. Reach bench marks and keep at it.

Promo Tip #2 Image is everything. Image is the complete package artist/band name, look, performance, merchandise, and style, to how that brand is marketed. A stage name can be a descriptive statement of the image you or your band project. Be unique and interesting to look at in some way....build your own unique stage persona.

Promo Tip #3 Word of mouth has always been the best promotion - tell people what you do. Get people talking. Create your buzz by just giving enough info to get people interested, but hold some secrets close.

Promo Tip #4 Those that promote the most win.

Promo Tip #5 You may be a truly great talent, but without getting out there and consistently marketing yourself, networking, meeting the right people, maintaining your image, and being humble, your talent will only get you so far.

Promo Tip #6 Be innovative in your promotional efforts! The Internet has made it possible to hear a LOT more music, from a LOT more artists. You are now a very small fish in a very large pond - you will need to find a way to stand out, above and glow in the dark. Think beyond the box on every promo tip.

Promo Tip #7 Learn web basics to use the Net to your advantage. The Internet thrives on links, quality content, keywords and consistency. Properly use the tools of the Internet to build your online brand.

Promo Tip #8 Create a web site. Buy your own artist name or band name URL for your web site, keep it simple, easy to remember, make sure it loads quickly and is easy to navigate.

Promo Tip #9 Submit your web link to online music directories, search engines, good music resource sites, in the best possible descriptive category. Use niche sites like tour date sites, lifestyle, regional, music magazine, music ezines, music Blogs and similarly themed sites.

Promo Tip #10 Use Myspace, Tagworld, Frappr, Facebook and any of the good social networks and extend your fan base. Update on a regular schedule.

Promo Tip #11 Go beyond the social networks and sign up to the best indie and unsigned music artist sites. Add a full profile, good photos, your best music, update the info regularly and DO NOT REDIRECT them with only a little info to find out more at another site. These indie communities are built to attract music biz personnel as well, to browse for the talent needed for various projects. While you have the viewers attention and time, have the important info right there, don't waste their time with a redirect link! Include a link to your main site, if they want to learn more they will go to it.

Promo Tip #12 Hand out your CDs (or demos). Have your web link printed on the CD. Include your band name and contact info as well. Remember, your name on the work is more important than the name of the work. Hand the CD to club owners that feature your type of music.

Promo Tip #13 Send press releases and reviews of your shows to local print newspapers, magazines and event papers. When writing press releases, read up on "press release tips" and the like to tweak your presentation.

Promo Tip #14 Professional photos mean you take yourself seriously. All photos in your press kit should be quality photos, not just your main bio picture. The money spent on a photographer that can capture your music "image" is money well spent.

Promo Tip #15 Collect addresses and email addresses (email is free!) to keep your fans current on what you are up to. When building your lists, try to list their location - city, state and zip with a bit of personal input about that fan. This is a great way to create a more personal and targeted mailing list without bombarding people that are too far away to attend a show.

Promo Tip #16 Practice and practice and practice. Longevity in the music business means learning new things, constantly creating, and always improving.

Promo Tip #17 Zero in on your target. Know where they hang out, where they shop, what they do for fun, and hit them where they live - online and off. Your audience is a specific crowd of people so don't waste time being where they are not.

Promo Tip #18 Play, play and play some more. Get gigs in one part of town on Friday and another part of town on Saturday. Do mini tours outside of your town.

Promo Tip #19 Create your own support group of family, friends, and school mates - communicate well with them on your plans and goals to help spread the word on you, where you plan to go and how you plan on getting there. Delegate tasks to the appropriate people.

Promo Tip #20 Online send out press releases and reviews of shows via all appropriate sites.

Promo Tip #21 Get online air play. There are a lot of indie radio webcasts, join sites and do what you have to do to get on the playlists.

Promo Tip #22 Create an interesting banner to drop in your forum signatures or other online locations. Many message boards will let you leave a link and/or banner in your signature, but don't like blatant advertising.

Promo Tip #23 Brand your name across the world and be ever mindful of the image you wish to portray whenever out in public or online. When it's in print, it's permanent.

Promo Tip #24 There is such a thing as overkill, in that it is better to describe your band/music as "we sound similar to the Beatles" rather than "we are the biggest thing since Led Zeppelin!" (or better than). So word your description accordingly.

Promo Tip #25 The music business is in the business to make money. If your career is in music, know when to be businesslike.

Promo Tip #26 Learn every area of the business you are in. Knowledge is power.

Promo Tip #27 You must network. Meet people, get out there, shake hands, listen to them as well and let them know about your music. Build those relationships.

Promo Tip #28 Be on friendly terms with other bands and artists in your area.

Promo Tip #29 Create a "street team", online and/or offline - they are core people that wish to help you further your marketing efforts. Give away free tickets, CDs or merchandise to your street team as incentive.

Promo Tip #30 Announce every song, every CD, decent chart position, contest win, top sales on releases, announce anything and everything to stay in the public's eye. If you can't write a decent article up for the press release, get someone that can. Write a review of every gig and get feedback from local VIPs, fans, whoever matters and include the best quotes. Is it news worthy? Write and promote it. Get the most mileage you can from your promotional tactics.

Promo Tip #31 Never mail your CD without a purpose or a contact person's name on it and expect miracles. Far better that the contact person knows to expect your CD, his or her name is spelled correctly, and you are mailing it to a company that actually works with your style of music.

Promo Tip #32 Wear your band! Get a jacket, t-shirts (etc) and add your band name or logo on it. Wear it everywhere and be a walking advertisement. If you have a niche fan base, think of a merchandise item that they need that of course has your name on it!

Promo Tip #33 Create an interesting band logo. It can be a conversation starter or a potential contest question.

Promo Tip #34 Join a Songwriting Circle. This is a local idea (though it is possible through the Internet), to meet with other songwriters in your own area and share your songs. You can get feedback on your work, share ideas and tips, possibly collaborate on work, learn about what's happening locally, help each other in many ways. If you wanted to start your own circle or look for one, you could use Craigslist for your Wanted or Needed post. Most ask that you be open minded and dedicated, with a willingness to listen and give feedback.

Promo Tip #35 Burn your best song as a single. On the CD and cover include ALL contact info, website, names, etc and distribute that CD wherever you go, for free.

Promo Tip #36 Have a custom vinyl car wrap created about your music/band and put it on your car. OR a use a magnetic door sign for your vehicle will work as well.

Promo Tip #37 Cross promote online on your web sites with local bands as well. You give them a boost on your site and they give the same back to you. Ask other people to LINK TO YOUR music site from their website!

Promo Tip #38 Introducing your band whether in person or online has a lot of similarity in speech writing techniques, in that you have to grab the reader or listener or viewer in the first 30 seconds. Your opening line needs to have punch, snag the audience and reel them right in. Remember the rock group KISS and "Are you ready to Rock?!!" Find your attention getting line and use it. Don't fall victim to the less inspiring, "um, hi guys, um, we are the 'Example' band..."

Promo Tip #39 Use Internet class ads as well as local newspapers to promote upcoming events and possible collaborations with others. Print papers and magazines need advance notice so plan accordingly.

Promo Tip #40 Create an online newsletter, with content of value to the receiver. This is an invaluable way to keep fans informed on gigs, news, gossip, new releases and other great info. Send out your newsletter about once a month.

Promo Tip #41 Be outrageous or controversial. Shock value can work, but it can backfire too. Can you maintain the image? It has worked for many, but was a disaster for many more. Think this tip out.

Promo Tip #42 Create a fan club online and get them to spread your banners, links and provide content for them to spread.

Promo Tip #43 Who are the VIPs in your community - who are the popular people in your area? Get to know them, give them a free CD and invite them to your show. When they speak, others will listen.

Promo Tip #44 Create a video and get on YouTube. Place your video on all relevant video sites. Video Scrapbook (or Diary) your music band's progress, accomplishments, and jam sessions. This could make for good clips in other projects.

Promo Tip #45 Have a CD, digital download and other merchandise for sale. Generate some sales so you have something to invest in other areas of your marketing effort.

Promo Tip #46 Have star quality, but don't be a big-head. Let people know you are professional and have the ability to be a long lasting star in this business.

Promo Tip #47 Never Spam email.

Promo Tip #48 Have a press kit ready to send out or email. Have it neatly organized with a brief bio, a short description (about 30 words or less) on what you sound like, full length bio, quality photos, music samples, current press releases and quality newsworthy items, song lyrics, radio airplay and chart position information, and detailed contact information.

Promo Tip #49 Join online music groups and newsgroups.

Promo Tip #50 Be a bit mysterious, hold back and leave them wanting more. Timing is everything for some info, releases, etc.

Promo Tip #51 Create a music slogan of up to 8 words (less is better) that quickly, accurately and in a catchy manner describes your music in a real way.

Promo Tip #52 Give a review to get a review, honestly is the best policy, but never brutality. Many times someone will return the favour and it shows your knowledge, your twist, on the music created.

Promo Tip #53 Print up posters and/or flyers about your upcoming show and post them wherever your type of fans would hang out and include your web link, show date, name of CD, where CD can be purchased.

Promo Tip #54 Get into podcasting and videocasting yourself or making your music available for podcasting.

Promo Tip #55 Tag your MP3s with your name or band name, not just the song name. They need to know WHO did this material when they happen across it months later.

Promo Tip #56 Know who you are! Get into an appropriate category so that you can be found. People have to be able to identify your sound into a category that they can identify with. You may want to portray a new edgy sound, which is fine, but there are still general categories that people search on in record stores or online and you have to be found in one of them.

Promo Tip #57 Throw a listen-in. Contact record stores, coffee shops, book stores, malls, recreational areas, galleries, cool clothing stores or nightclubs that are willing to support local music. The free listen-in could have talk session and discounted CDs with coupons.

Promo Tip #58 Keep it simple silly, web sites that take a long time to load, are not easy to navigate, and are not interesting will not keep the viewer's attention long enough for them to get to know you. So don't make your personal website or any site that can be customized, so frilly that it turns a potential opportunity away.

Promo Tip #59 Join local communities and organizations and go to meetings periodically and pay attention. Listen for opportunities in what they are saying and perhaps volunteer. Help them and they will help you. Non-profit organizations are likely to have access to media outlets that may give you some exposure.

Promo Tip #60 Check your public and local radio stations that play your type of music and try to get some air time.

Promo Tip #61 You will hear a lot of no's and negativity. That is to be expected as everyone's taste is different. Hopefully someone will give you some constructive criticism. Learn from it what you can but keep moving forward.

Promo Tip #62 Develop yourself as a complete package. Record labels do not spend the money on A&R as in the day. Educate yourself as a well-rounded music artist and present yourself as such.

Promo Tip #63 Elevator Pitch - If you only have one shot to make an impression in 30 seconds or less, can you do it? You will need to, so practice it!

Promo Tip #64 Post your gigs on your website(s), class ads, Craigslist, Backpage and other sites for your location.

Promo Tip #65 Submit your music to songwriting competitions, musician competitions, singing contests - try out for American Idol, for gosh sakes!

Promo Tip #66 Do a free conference call to chat with fans using your website. Record the call and follow up by posting the MP3 on your site. Promote it for all its worth.

Promo Tip #67 Never release an inferior product, send out professional, and only your very best demos and new releases.

Promo Tip #68 Get testimonials and reviews from people that matter and start locally if you have to. Add them to your press kit.

Promo Tip #69 Make sure you make it easy for potentials sales to happen whether on your site or at a show. Make the payment process, safe, secure and EASY.

Promo Tip #70 Have a house concert. Invite the neighbourhood to your backyard.

Promo Tip #71 Give your fans insider, behind the scenes, back stage with the band info and videos. This is great info to include in newsletters - people that signed up to learn more about you on purpose.

Promo Tip #72 Take the good with the bad, and take it all graciously. You must keep your image clean or at least maintain the aforementioned image.

Promo Tip #73 Don't waste time, prioritize and go with the best bets. Put your energy into the correct market for YOUR music.

Promo Tip #74 If you can write well about a music subject, write and distribute articles. Always source the article back to your website. Let it be redistributed with the bottom author source info to spread your message and link.

Promo Tip #75 Gig swap with other bands from another area to widen your fan base.

Promo Tip #76 A music profile or bio, press kit and press releases should all be well written, free of misspellings, kept current, and to the point. Schedule updates of your various online activities.

Promo Tip #77 Find a business in your area that you can partner with for mutual benefit. If something about a song, style, or image would boost a local business, develop a cross promotional relationship.

Promo Tip #78 Respond to all your correspondence in a timely, businesslike, and correct manner - appropriate to the sender. Be considerate of your audience.

Promo Tip #79 Give people what they want. It's all about the fans. If they come to your website, give them information that makes THEM feel good. If they come to your show, entertain them, thank them and thank the venue for the experience.

Promo Tip #80 Don't disappear. Once you have started building your momentum, it is a continuous onslaught.

Promo Tip #81 Attend music conferences, indie showcases, music festivals. Gain exposure and network.

Promo Tip #82 Be easy to work with and be flexible. A good reputation carries a lot of weight. Flexibility can also mean possibly adjusting areas of your work or image so as to get your foot in the door if need be.

Promo Tip #83 Have a cause. Create an event to promote that cause. Team up with other like-minded bands and make a news worthy event out of that cause.

Promo Tip #84 Business Cards - When talking to anyone, hand one out. You must include the link to your website. Consider your link as your online business card.

Promo Tip #85 Rolodex your contact list (some sites have contact managers in their member consoles). Make a list and keep it current of all the places online and offline that you need to post to when you need to send out reoccurring press releases of

news and events. Be aware that many sites have limits in number and/or time frames, be careful to not exceed them.

Promo Tip #86 Invoke your personality into your writings to make your invitations, announcements and introductions fun and effective.

Promo Tip #87 Clearly define what you are about - quickly, online or offline. People have short attention spans and are short on time - not just the music industry, but most people in general. This is very important! Don't waste words. Make anything you have to say about yourself or band enough to give the important necessary information and cut out the nonsense.

Promo Tip #88 Create a band calendar with some humorous photos of the various band members at various events.

Promo Tip #89 You heard it through the grapevine. Share "some" inside knowledge with other bands and songwriters in your area. Start your own information highway.

Promo Tip #90 Create an automated template for emails. Take the time to add the person's name with a personal titbit, but save time with a ready made email guide. Respond to unsolicited emails with your own personalized marketing message and a link to your website.

Promo Tip #91 Play for free if you have to, any where, any time. Create an event, an event with a cause and donate the proceeds to a charity. This can open up some interesting contacts and opportunities. Sponsor an event.

Promo Tip #92 Reach out and touch your fans. Whether someone else is maintaining your online presence or not, occasionally touch base with fans personally.

Promo Tip #93 Include every ounce of contact info needed upon every available surface.

Promo Tip #94 Borrow an idea from other sources, even outside the music industry. If it works for that company, perhaps you can adapt the idea to market your music as well. Find a way to put a new twist or slant on a successful band's tactics.

Promo Tip #95 Send birthday cards to your fans - of course, you need to get their birthday info when they sign up for mailing lists.

Promo Tip #96 Get involved in the music forums and message boards that target your music segment and ALWAYS include your signature URL (aka web link)!!

Promo Tip #97 Start a Music or Band Blog, well written and kept current. Submit it to music Blog directories.

Promo Tip #98 Create a novelty song that topics a holiday, a hot news item, your city or town, sports team, political event or other idea and gain exposure on promoting this song.

Promo Tip #99 Listen to your fans and learn what brought them to your show. This is very effective to giving you feedback on which promotional tool worked.

Promo Tip #100 Success does not happen to those that wait. A record label, music deal, stardom, just creating a website "and they will come" does not just land in your lap with you doing nothing. You have to make success come to you. Be persistent, be confident, roll up your sleeves, it is going to take some serious work.

But wait, there's more! We could not stop at 100! Here are a few more great tips:

Promo Tip #101 Use the Internet to research and keep current on new ways and new sites to market your music.

Promo Tip #102 Strength in numbers. Build joint ventures, collaborations and/or online partners on a project and both of you market that project.

Promo Tip #103 Have a professional email address.

Promo Tip #104 Don't burn your bridges. Even with the increasing number of music "wanna-be's" the music industry is a relatively small and close knit community. A wrong done to you by someone early in your career, may be that "someone" in a position of music power one day that you just might need to do business with.

Promo Tip #105 Join the party, even if not in the mood. Don't respond to the inevitable "what do you do" question with your day job, but tell your potentially new fan you are a musician and hand them your business card.

Promo Tip #106 Keep a journal of your marketing efforts with what worked and what did not work. This can be used in many ways down the road besides tracking your efforts. A book or e-book maybe?

Promo Tip #107 If out partying, have a designated friend or band mate for image control. If you get into something that could potentially land you in trouble, that controller gets you out of the situation before it can hurt your image. Video can be on the Internet before you even get home, so protect your image at all costs if you happen to get out of control.

Promo Tip #108 Business is business. There is a time and place for slang/explicit language, behaviour, and the like. Project yourself in a professional manner. Know when you are onstage and when you are not.

Promo Tip #109 Get your own competition going about your band or a new release. Give something away, have fans register at local record stores, find a way to get buzz going by asking a great question.

Promo Tip #110 Self promote everyday, in every way, one way or the other.

Some of these pointers may not be for you. That's fine. Do what you need to do, just make sure we ALL hear about you. Very true that many artists do not have the funds to do some of these tips, but with the Internet and some ingenuity it possible to get around this to an extent.

The difference between you and another band that made it may not be that their music was better. It might be that they found a way to get noticed better. The music industry needs music talent and is constantly on the look out for something that stands out. If you have the guts and perseverance, it can be you.

Artistopia - The Ultimate Artist Development Resource (<http://www.artistopia.com>) is an artist development and community on the web providing music artists, songwriters and bands all the tools needed for displaying their talent, music business collaboration, marketing and networking. Online since 2003, Artistopia develops advanced technology solutions that leverage the Internet to both the music artist and music companies respective advantage.

**Article Source:** ISA website ([www.songwriter.co.uk](http://www.songwriter.co.uk))

*Think outside the CD. It used to be that songwriters got paid only through radio play and record sales. But technological advances have changed how songs earn money. Did you know, for example, that the source for most music listening hours is neither CDs nor radio - it is video games, a market for music writers that didn't exist 20 years ago? In addition, advertising agencies, motion picture and TV companies and Internet websites have all opened up new licensing opportunities. For example, MTV discovered one songwriter at MP3.com and licensed his music for background in its Real World television series, resulting in a nice income stream for the artist.*