

8 Steps to Creating an Effective Sales Promotion Strategy for Your Music

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Sales promotions are short-term incentives intended to stimulate a quick buying response in your target

customer. Coupons, one-time exclusive offers, customer loyalty programs, two-for-the-price-of-one discounts, and limited-time prizes with purchase are all examples of sales promotions in the consumer world. While it's true you'll sometimes have to give away your product for free to build awareness and help start a buzz, sales promotions can



be applied to everything, including merchandise, studio time, music lessons, concert tickets, and more. From choosing the right type of sales promotion that fits your band, to executing your sales promotions tastefully, these eight tips will help you create a strategy that brings light to your products and services and generates healthy sales.

1. Decide on the type of sales promotion that fits your band

Whether you choose to utilize discount ticket coupons that you allow fans to print out from your website, or you announce a "one-time exclusive offer" to purchase your music at your record release party, remember that you must always stay in sync with the desired image you'd like to project into the marketplace. An anti-capitalistic punk band must obviously use sales promotions very subtly (or not at all), or they might otherwise come across as being phony.

2. Decide on the different media you'll use to deliver your sales promotion

Remember that sales promotions can be delivered using internet techniques (email and your personal website), guerrilla marketing techniques (postcards and flyers you hand out to people on the street), direct marketing techniques (brochures you mail), and face-to-face selling techniques (pitches you make to music students and recording clients). The idea is to utilize a couple different mediums to ensure you thoroughly reach your intended audience.

3. Decide exactly when the sales promotion will begin and end

Sales promotions must have a clearly defined beginning and an end. Will it be just for the night of a show, for two weeks, or for the entire holiday season? Whatever it is, make it very clear. "Urgency" is a key ingredient in sales promotions and in getting your customers to ultimately respond.

4. Test the sales promotion on a limited number of people

Before printing a few hundred coupons to send off to your fans, be sure to get some feedback on the words and graphics you use. The idea is to create the most effective promotion that will push your customers buttons and get them to take action. Test out your sales promotions on a small sample audience first and make any necessary adjustments. You'll save time and money.

5. Keep the purpose of your sales promotion clearly in mind

Be clear on why you're holding a sales promotion and what you'd like to achieve. Is your goal to sell a specific number of units or is it to raise a certain amount of money for your Kickstarter or GoFundMe campaign, or to produce a live concert that will benefit a charity? Whatever it is, state a very clear objective.

6. Control the number of promotions you hold

Remember that too much of a good thing is a bad thing. Sending out emails every other week telling people that the promotion you have is a "one-time specially reduced price" just looks bad. Always be tasteful, truthful, and subtle.

7. Stick to the rules of the promotion

Don't be tempted to make an offer that's not in line with the rules of the promotion. Doing this can clearly compromise the integrity of the promotion and even your brand. Stick to your own rules! If you say the promotion ends on December 24, the promotion really needs to end on December 24.

8. Remember that "sales" is not a bad word

Some people think of marketing as sleazy or pushy. This reaction is usually due to bad past experiences with deceptive advertisements or pushy marketing tactics. But as media critic Douglas Rushkoff said in a PBS special entitled *The Persuaders*, **"Don't let your marketing show."** If you can focus on the creation of products and services that uphold your vision, satisfy customers by giving them what they need, and present your offers in a non-intrusive manner that make fans feel like they're part the process, people won't even know you're marketing to them.

Unless you're just a hobbyist, at some point you have to start generating some type of income from your products. Sales promotions cause customers to take action and help increase your sales. So make no mistake: if you want to make it, you have to market.