

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION, MARKETING & ART

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PROMOTION & MARKETING

In the following paper we will examine some common troubleshooting and suggested ways to achieve positive results with your FReeZA committee. We will also look at some industry trends and ways to increase the brand name of your local event both with young people and the wider community.

PRODUCTION NAME

A common troubleshooting query from FReeZA groups is around the public perception of the event – a perception that the event is low budget and poorly presented. More and more FReeZA groups are using 'production names' for this reason. A production name maintains a 'by young people, for young people' model but it also asserts itself as a professional entity giving your FReeZA event an identity. Production names can in turn work positively for your committee boosting members' confidence and pride in what they are presenting.

KNOWING YOUR MARKET

As part of the FReeZA program we each have a youth committee. One of the most important factors in a successful show is a committed youth committee. As the FReeZA worker it is important to ensure your committee is as diverse as possible so that it best reflects your community whether it be age, sex, cultural, geographic, student, unemployed, part/fulltime work, young people with a disability etc. Your youth committee are representative of all young people from your community - they will be the decision makers for your FReeZA program, which often is the most significant youth entertainment option in your town/suburb. With a diverse youth committee your market should be well represented ensuring your events are well targeted to young people's interests in your area.

WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY WANT?

Your youth committee is the most powerful tool in ascertaining what young people want. The most simple and effective way is to run a survey, however this is not always possible and sometimes, young people don't identify with participating in a survey. Anecdotal responses are just as valuable. If you have the opportunity to hit the street and talk to young people in an informal setting whether it is through visiting schools, through an outreach program or even down at the local shop or hang-out, this is a great way to gather information. Your research coupled with the committees' research could be the right combination to structure your events.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Your event is planned and its time to get promoting. Have a think about what you currently do to promote your events and how effective these plans are – there are sure to be some techniques with a high success rate that work for your community. It's important to not change anything that's already working for you! However, consider building on your success by introducing different promotional techniques over a series of shows to keep your audience guessing, thus maintaining the surprise-factor as to how they will hear about the next show.

For example, FReeZA committees commonly promote their shows with a press release and either a poster or promo-card. In marketing terms, it is advisable to get your message across in three different mediums to ensure your audience absorbs your advertising. For example if young people could hear about your FReeZA event at a school assembly, read about it in the local paper and then have a promo card handed to them, they are more likely to come to the

show than if they only saw a poster on a noticeboard. Hence, we are working to create a 'vibe'.

In getting your message across you should consider targeting both young people and adults.

Some creative ways to promote to young people could include: speaking at school assembly; info in school newsletters; doing an acoustic performance 'launch' for the show at a local hang-out like a retail outlet or train station; community partnerships with youth-friendly businesses; using sidewalk-chalk on the footpath in conjunction with retail outlets; advertising through sporting facilities/clubs like pools, gyms and the local footy team; advertising at Centrelink or other community centres/facilities that young people may use.

Some creative ways to promote to adults could include: info in school newsletters (even if students don't read them, often parents do!); editorial in local papers or radio; community notice boards, eg. supermarkets; community partnerships with local businesses to raise awareness eg. rotary clubs; libraries; community centres; health clinics.

ENGAGING LOCAL BUSINESSES & SCHOOLS

Local businesses: brainstorm with your committee various youth-friendly business to approach; these should particularly include any business where young people recreate or visit often. You could approach these businesses with a proposal to support the FReeZA program in a variety of ways and in a variety of levels.

For example:

1. By putting a poster in the businesses window and stocking a bundle of cards on their counter you would gain exposure during business hours. The benefit for the business is that over time young people will return to their premises to get their info for the next event generating increased traffic for the business.
2. For those that are keen to show extra support you could suggest partnerships that work more closely, for example using sidewalk chalk in front of their outlet or hosting a launch for the event as mentioned in the previous section.

What's in it for the business?

1. For those businesses that are looking for a larger benefit you could offer a logo placement on your advertising as a sponsor and work closely with them to increase your exposure.
2. You could invite the business to attend the event with a market/info stall to promote a product or gather information from young people through surveys and giveaways.
3. You could work with the business to create a media opportunity in the local paper showing their support for young people & the community

Schools: most schools will have a student welfare coordinator, a careers teacher and/or a music teacher. Any or all of the above would be interested to hear about the FReeZA program especially if one of your committee members attends their school. Networking with teachers is an essential step in getting the approval of a secondary college to promote internally. It is important to gain the support of staff like a student welfare coordinator before presenting to a school principle or board. Your efforts in networking can also be of benefit to teachers as they can make referrals to your youth committee when they have students interested in music or events. This in turn helps your FReeZA committee with recruitment of new members.

POSTER ART

When creating your poster art there are three important things worth considering:

1. hierarchy of information
2. size of product and viewing distance
3. composition

1. The hierarchy of information relates to the most important item on the poster that is going to 'sell' your event to young people. This could be the brand name of the event, eg. 'Push Over'; or it could be your headline band eg. 'Grinspoon'. This piece of information should be allocated sufficient space to sell the event. The rest of the information can be allocated medium-sized areas which may include the venue, date & entry price, while perhaps the smallest allocation of space becomes the conditions of entry and contact phone number.
2. Determining the size of the promotional product is essential in estimating the minimum font size to present your information.

The A3 poster: when creating an A3 poster, think about where the poster will be displayed. This most likely would be on a noticeboard or perhaps in a shop window or on a poster-pole. The viewing distance for this product would typically be up to 4-5 metres away. Hence, your selling point (eg. Push Over or Grinspoon..) should be readable from this distance. Your font size needs to be large enough to draw the public in to read the rest of the poster.

The Promo Card: Now think about a small promo card eg. 55mm x 90mm. The viewing distance for this product is less than a metre away as you would be holding it in your hand while you read. You have the flexibility to reduce the size of your information, but you also have the flexibility of using two sides of a card. A good way to present your selling point in this case would be to allocate an entire side of the card so when handing these out to young people that's the first thing they see. NB. When determining minimum font size consider young people who may be vision impaired – don't make the print too small.

The Street Poster: the street poster (1m x 2m) is similar to the A3 poster however it will instead appear on street corners and target traffic. The viewing distance is up to 15 meters away and the public will most likely be travelling in a car at the time of viewing. The space allocated for the selling point in this case needs to be large enough to attract people's attention in a small space of time as they drive past.

3. Composition: a poster needs to flow. Think about the way you present information and how you want the public to read your poster. A common technique is to use a clockwise or anti-clockwise flow. For example, 12 o'clock is your brand name; 2 o'clock is the band line-up; 5 o'clock is the date, venue & entry price; 7 o'clock is the conditions of entry; 9 o'clock is the graphic that sells the event; 12 o'clock is back to the brand name and now we've gone full circle in reading the poster.

CURRENT PROMOTIONAL TRENDS: STREET TEAMS; E-TEAMS & SMS-TEAMS

You may have heard of the terms street team, e-team and or sms-team. While the 'street team' has been a benchmark in the music/events industry for some time, the emergence of e-teams and sms teams has become a standard practice for promoting live events, CD releases and the like. These promotional teams, in most cases are young people that are recruited to work on a particular campaign. Given that we already have young people on our youth committee, starting a promotional team for your FReeZA event is easily done.

Why try promoting through these mediums?

Young people respond to a variety of advertising. A poster on a noticeboard always works well, but targeted advertising straight to a mobile phone or email inbox can be personalised and more direct.

What is each team responsible for?

Street team: putting up posters in the community, networking with traders and businesses, distributing promo cards at targeted hot-spots like after school traffic; attending other all-ages events and distributing cards to targeted audiences; replenishing posters as need be over the duration of the promotional campaign.

e-team: online promotion through bands' websites and communities like myspace.com; generating chat topics on discussion forums to create a vibe for the event; accessing mailing lists to promote event online through email.

sms-team: mobile phone promotion through forwarding text messages for special offers like discount entry

How do I create the teams?

Start with asking your FReeZA committee to nominate to be the team leader for one or more teams. Advertise externally through your mailing list and through local bands to join the promo-teams.

What's in it for team members? Why should I join?

You need to offer an incentive for young people to assist with promoting your event. You could offer each team member free entry to your next event and give them a guest list to bring up to say 20 people for a half price entry. You could also offer each team member a laminate to meet the headline band backstage.

How does the word spread? How will I know it's working?

For the e-team and sms-team; the promotion for the event works like a chain letter. The team member sends the email/sms promo offer to their entire phone/address book and requests that they forward it on. The email/sms trail creates a pyramid effect whereby the recipients multiply with each forwarded message. The sms message should include a discount entry price on presentation to your event. The way to measure the success of your sms-team is to count how many punters present this sms for discount entry at the door.