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**jazz**  
**SERVICES**

A VOICE FOR JAZZ

Marketing  
Your Band

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## INTRODUCTION

The term marketing has been bandied around the arts in the '80s and '90s with alacrity. It has been held by some as a wondrous panacea that will solve all problems - keep swallowing the jargon tablets and the world will beat a path to your door. Others have bridled at the very mention of the word. "Marketing, how can you market art?" they utter with lofty disdain. Many, however, have realised that marketing is a tool for survival in what is a very competitive world. This guide aims to demystify the jargon and demonstrate that marketing is the application of commonsense. That is: "Who will want to hear us?": "Those that can be encouraged to hear us": "Who will want to pay to hear us?".



# 1) WHAT IS MARKETING?

"Marketing is the activity that enables you, the producer, to get your music to the customer, who in turn markets your music to the audience."

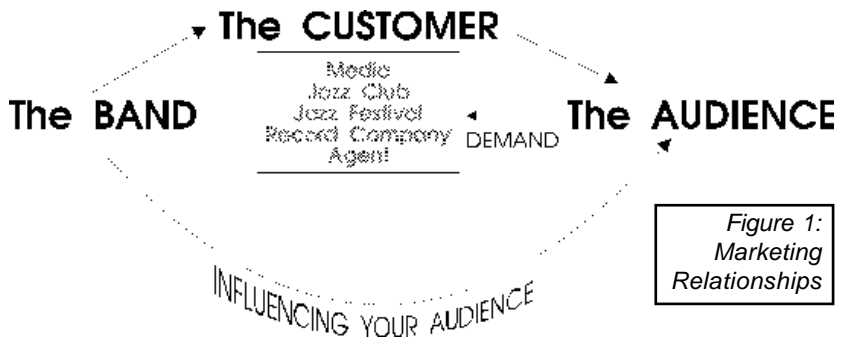
The marketing process for the jazz musician involves three sets of people: you the musician, your customer and the audience.

## THE MUSICIAN

You, the jazz musician have to package your music, fix a price and then promote it to the customer. The music being marketed will range across the full spectrum of jazz from New Orleans to free improvised and all points in between. For simplicity's sake we are going to call this music the "product". Some may object, but let us not forget we are marketing jazz which is the "product" of a unique creative process.

## THE CUSTOMER

Unless you hire the hall yourself and market directly to the audience or produce your own albums and market straight to the listener, your customer will be the venue manager, the record label, the jazz club promoter or any other person or organisation who uses jazz.

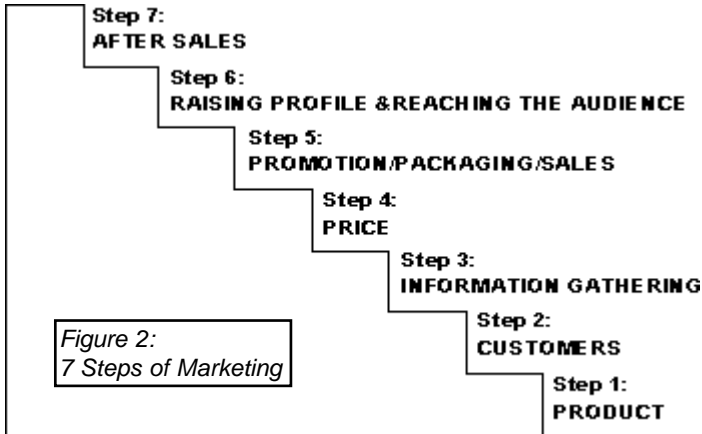


*Figure 1:  
Marketing  
Relationships*

## THE AUDIENCE

The audience is the consumer. If, for example radio or television is your customer then the consumers will be the people who listen to radio or watch television. In everyday terms the audience or consumer is the "punter". If the major components are put in graphic form then the process falls into three activities: you to your customer; your customer to your audience, and you will also endeavour to influence your audience so that you are able to stimulate 'demand' for your product.

## 2) WHAT ACTIVITIES DOES MARKETING ENTAIL?



### STEP 1: PRODUCT

It is not the purpose of this guide to act as critic or in some way advise on the quality or content of the music. That to one side there are a couple of tips -

- ☞ There are only two types of jazz: good and bad. If you don't know whether your music is good or bad, then your customers and audiences certainly will. You might fool some of the people some of the time, but if the product is bad then you fool only yourself.
- ☞ Do not be a musical clone - develop your own voice. Strive for that unique sound even if you have chosen as your style one of the established "eras" or "streams" of jazz development.

### STEP 2: CUSTOMERS

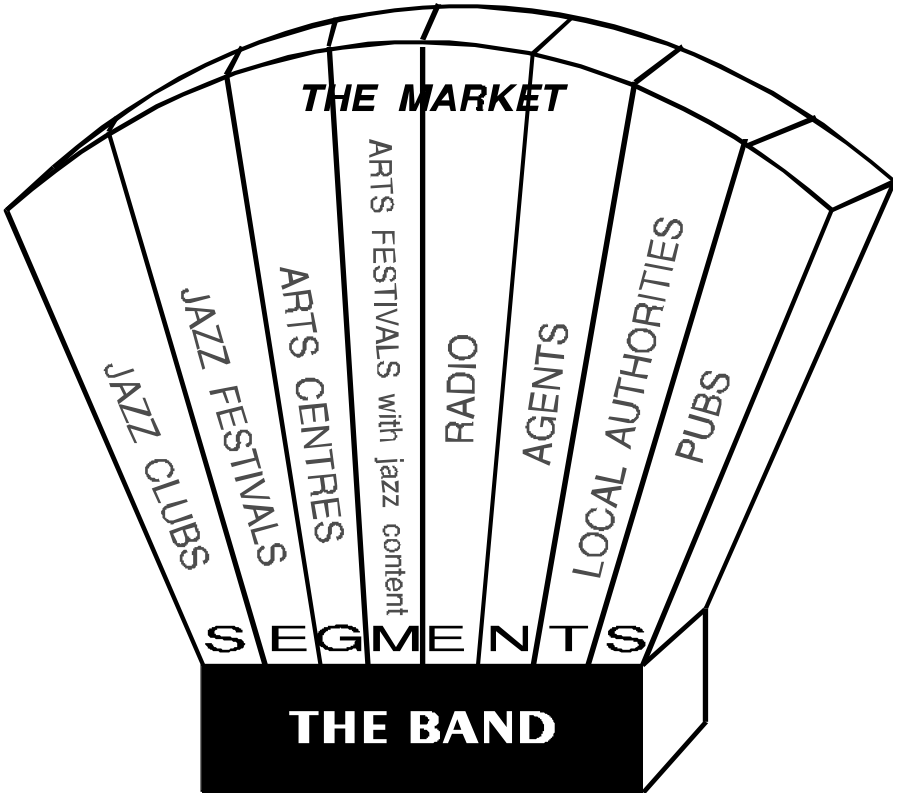
Every bandleader or musician needs to ask themselves two very important questions -

- ☞ "Who are my customers?"
- ☞ "Who would I like to have as customers?"

The market for jazz is comprised of those who want - or need - what the product can give them. The customers wants or needs may differ. For example, some jazz clubs operate a policy restricting the booking of newcomers to traditional or mainstream bands, whilst other jazz clubs will only book contemporary jazz. The same applies to jazz festivals. Wine bars and pubs will in the main be influenced by the price that the band charges, which in turn will have implications for the number of musicians which can be used.

Figure 3:  
Market  
Segments

POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS



The overall market for jazz can therefore be divided into distinct units or groups of customers. Set out below are a few of the more obvious categories - or market segments - in jazz.

You then have to examine these and other segments to see which are worth selecting in terms of the amount of effort required to get a gig. For example, a band starting out with little or no reputation will probably initially want to secure gigs in small jazz clubs, wine bars or pubs. In time they hopefully will get known, attract reviews and receive favourable comment. By this process they raise their profile, start to attract attention, and are then in a position to move into arts festivals, arts centres, major jazz clubs and broadcasting.

Once you have selected your initial segments, you then have to find a corner or niche within that segment. Jazz Clubs, for example have different booking policies. Some clubs will book across the full range of jazz styles, whilst others will serve audiences who have preference for contemporary or modern jazz. So, if you are a New Orleans/Dixieland style band there would be little point in promoting your product to the Tintwistle Modern Jazz Club. Similarly, if you are the Nonesuch Contemporary Jazz Septet you would not sell yourself to the Beachyhead Preservation Jazz Club.

Remember, the whole process of selecting the categories or segments that you are aiming for is to find a piece of the action within those segments, and is concerned with maximising your efforts in getting a gig.

The nearest analogy would be like trying to knock the coconuts off a shy at two hundred yards with a blunderbuss. All you would succeed in doing is peppering the coconuts, attenders and bystanders with leadshot. However, if you had a rifle you would soon be hitting the coconuts with practised ease.

The questions posed at the beginning of this section "Who are my customers?" and "Who do I want as customers" lead to the third step, which is information gathering. Information gathering will identify those customers and their segments holding the best opportunities for your efforts.

### **STEP 3: INFORMATION GATHERING**

The gathering of information on customers involves three areas of research:

- ☞ Past
- ☞ Present
- ☞ Future

The aim of this exercise is identifying customers to whom you are going to promote your product. The results of your researches will be lists of likely customers in each chosen segment.

#### **Past Information**

Unless you are taking your first steps in promoting your music you will have a record of past gigs. You need to look back over your diaries for the past two years and extract all the gigs you have played at. Some of the gigs will be obvious one-offs such as dep work or functions. However, in all likelihood there will be a number of dates that will start the ball rolling in terms of helping you classify those segments and customers that you wish to promote and sell to.

This information, once extracted, needs to be checked and updated where necessary and put together in a usable form. For example, you may well pull out a number of jazz clubs you have worked in either with your own band, somebody else's band or as a guest soloist.

- ☞ Check with any existing sources you may have, such as the Jazz Services' *Jazz Book*, to see if the information is already available. If not then you need to check the accuracy of the venue name and address.
- ☞ Check that the name of the person at the jazz club is the one who will make the "buying" or booking decision. These people invariably change over time, especially if the jazz club or jazz society is run by a Committee. It is important that you identify the correct person so that you do not waste time, money and effort.



You should at this point have two sets of information - your past information set out as an information/sales/gig sheet and present information. Again, always be on your guard so that you avoid duplication of information.

### **Future Information**

Always keep a look out for new sources of information, new customers, changes in your existing information. Read the jazz press and what's on columns in the local, regional, national press for new venues opening up and, sadly, old ones closing down.

## **STEP 4: PRICE**

Oscar Wilde defined a cynic as a person who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. For the musician he/she must be aware of the value of their product to their customers and the most likely price it will fetch. To set a price it helps if you can focus on six areas:

- ☞ How much does it cost?
- ☞ What price is acceptable in the market place?
- ☞ How do you compare in value and price to other bands, ie: your competition?
- ☞ What value do customers place on your product?
- ☞ How does your product stand in relation to other bands?
- ☞ How does it all work in practice?

There are a number of costs involved in touring or one off gigs. For example Anytime Band is looking to fix a price per gig for some jazz clubs. The first task is to break the costs down into separate units. A sample breakdown would be as follows:

**Travel** - how will the band travel? In one car, two cars or a hired vehicle? Therefore allowances have to be made for your vehicle hire or cost of fuel if the band travels in their own cars.

**Overnight accommodation** - will the band need accommodation for the night or are they able to get back the same evening?

**Musicians' fee** - how much per musician? - and what is the acceptable minimum?

**Selling costs** - you will incur costs for fixing the gig, issuing contracts and finalising the arrangements eg: telephone calls, promotional material such as demo tapes and biogs.

**Marketing costs** - even if you are unable to spend money on leaflets or posters, there will be costs such as press releases and photographs.

It makes sense to spread the selling and marketing costs over a number of gigs and charge a % of each gig to contribute to these costs. When you put sums of monies to these units, add a percentage for your time and then you arrive at a total cost or basic selling price.

This convenient method of pricing ignores crucial factors. The first is that costs are not rigidly fixed, they can and do vary. Secondly when setting prices you will fix different prices - higher or lower. These prices will reflect what is acceptable in the marketplace, the value that the customer places on your product, the price of your competitors and how the customer values your product when they compare it to other bands.

	London/ Birmingham £	Birmingham/ Manchester £	Manchester/ Southend/ London £	Total £
<b>Petrol</b>	30.00	20.00	35.00	85.00
<b>Musicians' Fees</b>	400.00	400.00	400.00	1200.00
<b>Marketing &amp; Selling</b>	40.00	40.00	40.00	120.00
<b>Accommodation</b>	100.00	100.00	-	200.00
<b>Cost to Promoter</b>	<u>570.00</u>	<u>560.00</u>	<u>475.00</u>	<u>1605.00</u>

Figure 5: Cost plus Pricing

For example, let's look at the notional Anytime Band. They have managed to fix three gigs on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The band all live in London, the gigs are in Birmingham (Thursday), Manchester (Friday) and Southend (Saturday). The band is a quartet and they all travel in one car owned by the bandleader. The costings set out below assume the customers have the same perception and consequent value of the band (see Figure 5). Life would be so much easier if these assumptions held true - boring but easier. Fortunately, or unfortunately - depending on your point of view - the market place is made of customers with differing values and perceptions.

To continue the example without the assumptions. Your research into promoters past, present and future will have given you a feel for the market place. In Birmingham the promoter has been knocked out with the band, having heard them previously. He/she values their music highly, fairly confident they can get an audience and could be persuaded to pay more. In Manchester it's the first time they have booked the band and they're a bit jittery because of the risk involved - a similar sort of band bombed there 8 months previously. They will obviously strike a hard bargain and the price is lower than Birmingham. In Southend, the promoter likes the band but always wants to get the best price they can. They have plenty of bands to choose from, being within easy reach of London. By being flexible and recognising that the customer places a different value on the product than you, the pricing of the gigs may well alter to a degree (see Figure 6).

If you look at the costs and prices in figures 5 & 6 the total figures are virtually the same - a difference of £20 accounted for by a slightly cheaper hotel. The important figure is the cost to the promoter. In cost plus pricing the range of the price is narrow £570 in Birmingham to £475 in Manchester. In the market based method of pricing the range is greater - £680 in Birmingham to £420 in Southend - and takes into account:

The cost of the band - end result is that the band over three dates receives the same total as in the cost pricing method and takes into account -

- ☞ Acceptable market place price - awareness of the price of jazz in the market place has enabled you to price each venue accordingly .
- ☞ Competition - this is not about operating a price cutting war; it is about being aware of competitors' pricing.

	London/ Birmingham £	Birmingham/ Manchester £	Manchester/ Southend/ London £	Total £
<b>Petrol</b>	30.00	20.00	35.00	85.00
<b>Musicians' Fees</b>	500.00	350.00	350.00	1200.00
<b>Marketing &amp; Selling</b>	50.00	35.00	35.00	120.00
<b>Accommodation</b>	100.00	80.00	-	180.00
<b>Cost to Promoter</b>	<b><u>680.00</u></b>	<b><u>485.00</u></b>	<b><u>420.00</u></b>	<b><u>1585.00</u></b>

Figure 6: Market Based Method of Pricing

- ☞ The value that the "customer" places on your band.
- ☞ How your band stands in relation to other bands vying for gigs.

## STEP 5: PROMOTION: PACKAGING AND SELLING

So far we have concentrated on the product, customer and setting a price. The next step is the promotion of your band. Promotion in its widest sense is the communication of your band to existing and potential customers and audiences. The two crucial elements in the promotion of your band are the "packaging" and "selling" of your product.

First of all let us clear up any misconceptions that may arise from these words "packaging" and "selling".

- ☞ **Packaging** is the presentation and communication of your band and music that helps establish a rapport with your customers and audiences.
- ☞ **Selling** is not the foot in the door approach of the double glazing or brush salesperson. Selling is best described as "gaining acceptance", "winning approval" and "being persuasive" that will lead to a gig or the use of your band or music on radio, tv etc.

### Packaging

Packaging is inextricably bound up with your product. For example, if a company sells chocolates and they are beautifully packaged (you pull the ribbon, choirs sing the Hallelujah chorus, larks appear on the wing and the sun shines) but the chocolates taste like stopt's bile strained through old socks, then it is unlikely that the sale will be repeated. Therefore the first rule in packaging is to be satisfied with your product. After all there are only two types of music - good or bad. If you have not got a current CD - your best calling card - then the next best thing is a demo tape of your band.

#### *The Demo Tape*

The demo tape needs to be well recorded with a maximum of three tracks. This allows you to use C30 tapes, which will save you money. Your first track needs to project the band to its maximum effect. Do not fade tracks halfway through solos nor fade into the

next track. Hopefully, the promoter will want to listen to the band from beginning to end. The tape sleeve should contain details of the band such as personnel, instrumentation, date of recording, titles in order of the tracks and notice of the band's copyright. Do not forget to put your contact name, address and phone number on the sleeve. The tape itself needs the band name, contact name and telephone number and notice of copyright.

### *The Message*

The promotional message tells your customer what you and your band are all about and why they should listen to the tape. The message needs to be developed in three sections.

- ☞ The first section deals with you, your band and your music in a newsy, informational and explanatory way. The nearest bench mark for comparison would be any front page story from newspapers such as the Mail or Express (ie, simple and easy to read but gets the message across). The message should take up no more than one sheet of A4, circa 350 words.
- ☞ The second section deals with short but informative biographies of the band members - the bandleader will have been profiled in the first section.
- ☞ The third section lays out selected quotes from the press and media with the author's name, publication and date attributed to each quote. The section can be titled "What the papers say" or something similar... Please note, you do not need whole articles from the press, just phrases or sentences that sum up the band's qualities and reinforce the message.

Please do not forget to put contact name and telephone number on all three sections.

### *On Stage*

The final parts of packaging yourself and your band are manners, mien and demeanour on stage. That is not to say you have to emulate some ghastly chat show host with stitched on smile, servile blandishments and a fawning manner or on the other hand display all the warmth and vitality of an undertaker's mute. However, it does help to be smartly turned out and look reasonably cheerful even if your partner has run off with the local vicar and your credit cards. Finally, when you make an announcement, pick the microphone up. How many times have we all seen the band leader crouched over the microphone still attached to the stand, looking like Houdini in the final throes of escaping from a straitjacket.

### **Selling**

So far you will have researched and selected your market segments and customers, agreed on a pricing policy and packaged your band. The next step is selling yourself or, in the vernacular, "hustling for gigs". There are a number of steps in the selling process.

- ☞ Self Motivation
- ☞ Setting Your Targets.
- ☞ Information/Sales/Gig Sheet
- ☞ Calling the Customer
- ☞ Sending the Package
- ☞ Calling the Customer Again
- ☞ Negotiation and Close

### *Self-Motivation*

Selling by phone can be time consuming and as you slog away, sometimes with little result, it can be very depressing. However, there is no other way, unless you are fortunate in securing a manager or agent.

<b>VENUE INFORMATION</b> Venue Name _____ Contact Name _____ Address _____  Town/Post Code _____ Admin Tel: _____ Box Office Tel: _____ Fax: _____ Venue capacity: _____ Jazz day(s) _____ Jazz styles(s) _____	<b>PROMOTER INFORMATION</b> Company Name _____ Contact Name _____ Address _____  Town/Post Code _____ Admin Tel: _____ Fax: _____ Jazz day(s) _____ Jazz styles(s) _____																														
<b>CONTACT HISTORY:</b> Date called/contacted: _____ Date promotional material sent: _____ Call back date: _____ Gig? <span style="float: right;">YES / NO</span> No gig - date to call back on: _____	<b>PUBLICITY CONTACT</b> <i>(if different from Promoter or Venue)</i> Contact Name _____ Address _____  Town/Post Code _____ Admin Tel: _____ Fax: _____																														
<b>GIG DETAILS</b> Performance date: _____ Get in time: _____ Soundcheck time: _____ Performance time(s): _____ Performance duration(s): _____ Get out by time: _____	<b>ACCOMMODATION DETAILS</b> <i>(if appropriate)</i> Contact Name _____ Hotel/B&B _____ Address _____ Town/Post Code _____ Tel: _____ Fax: _____																														
<b>PUBLICITY DETAILS</b> Publicity deadline: _____ Date publicity sent: _____	<b>FINANCIAL SUMMARY</b> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">INCOME (£.P)</th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">EXPENDITURE (£.P)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Performance Fee</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>Travel</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>Accommodation</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>Publicity/Postage</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>Equipment Hire</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>Sundry</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>VAT</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>TOTAL</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> <tr><td>BALANCE</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td><td style="text-align: center;">_____</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		INCOME (£.P)	EXPENDITURE (£.P)	Performance Fee	_____	_____	Travel	_____	_____	Accommodation	_____	_____	Publicity/Postage	_____	_____	Equipment Hire	_____	_____	Sundry	_____	_____	VAT	_____	_____	TOTAL	_____	_____	BALANCE	_____	_____
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<b>CONTRACT DETAILS</b> Date contract sent: _____ Date contract returned: _____																															
<b>Technical Requirements</b> _____ _____ _____																															

Figure 7: Information/Sales/Gig Sheet

### Setting your targets

The first thing to do when you set your target is to plan to a future point in time. The rule of thumb is to be planning six months in advance. Secondly, how many calls you make per day or week. The question you have to ask yourself is how many calls can you reasonably and reliably manage in a given amount of time. It may be that you can comfortably make three or more calls per day, or you can make 10 to 15 calls per day. However many calls you set yourself to make each day or week, the golden rule is that the number on your target must be achievable. You will invariably come up against the answer machine: be prepared with a brief message that lets them know that you will be calling back the next day or later that evening. Also, if you know someone who happens to know the promoter, it will help to say that "xyz suggested I call you with regard to a gig..." etc.

It will also pay you to prioritise your calls to customers. In effect, you start with those promoters who might reasonably give you a gig. In short, start with the easiest and work up to the hardest.

#### *Information/Sales/Gig Sheet*

To help organise your current and future sales efforts you need a sales sheet. The sheet should ideally contain information on the venue or promoter, sales information, dates of callback if no gig is offered and a gig sheet that covers publicity and contact, contractual information, schedule of technical requirements and details of accommodation required. Figure 7 shows an example that can be used or modified.

#### *Calling the customer*

A well tried and tested approach when planning your calls and conveying your sales message is the ABC method. This method involves gaining the customers Attention and presenting the Benefits of the band in a Clear, Concise way. You will need to think about possible objections that the customer will raise and be prepared with possible answers. To that end, and to help ease the way and develop self confidence, it will be beneficial to prepare a script that will guide you through the opening conversation.

The first rule is to break the ice. Ask open ended questions eg: How are you?, What kind of bands have you had at your club recently? How was business? These are the kind of questions that will require an explanation in reply. Do not ask "closed" questions that will only draw a response of yes or no eg: Are you fully booked this month? Do you book in big bands? Do you do solo gigs? Are you open Sunday nights?

Gently introduce yourself and your band. Ask if they would be interested in booking the band. Talk about the band, what gigs you have done recently, the audiences you attract, or that you have just appeared at the prestigious XYZ Jazz Festival. If you meet with resistance then you need to persuade the promoter to listen to the tape.

#### *Send Your Package*

Send your tape and information with a covering note that thanks the promoter for taking the time to listen to the tape and that you will call them back within the next ten days. It also helps to send a copy of your date sheet: if there is a date near the promoter they may be persuaded to come and hear you play.

It is worth bearing in mind that there are too many bands chasing too little work. So be prepared for rejections and a variety of replies that will range from the brusque and charmless and the downright rude to the kindly diplomatic. Whatever the reaction always when selling remember two things:

- ☞ be positive
- ☞ common courtesy costs nothing: you do not have to have pranced about the playing fields of Eton or Harrow to have learnt good manners. Courtesy always leaves a good impression which may benefit you later.

#### *Calling the Customer Again*

When you call the customer again you could be on the end of a number of responses:

- ☞ "Don't call us, we'll call you."
- ☞ "The programme is full for the next six months."
- ☞ "Give us a call in six month's time."
- ☞ "Well, er, you can try us in six month's time."
- ☞ Any permutation of the four above.
- ☞ "Yes, we are interested, are you available on XYZ date? How much do you want?"

Congratulations, someone likes the band, the packaging has worked. You are now in a position to negotiate the best deal you can get for the band. Remember, everything is negotiable - especially your gig.

#### *Negotiation and close*

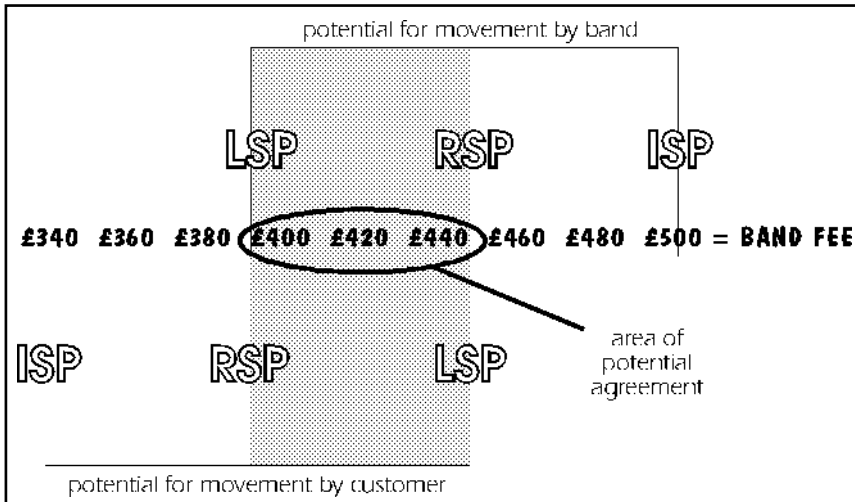
The golden rule in negotiating is "give and take", the end result of your bargaining is mutual gain - the promoter wants a band they can afford - you need a gig that, after expenses, earns you a reasonable fee.

Before you commence bargaining you will need to have decided upon three points, attached to these points is a price.

- ☞ **Ideal Settlement Point (ISP).** This is the best price that could be theoretically achieved.
- ☞ **Realistic Settlement Point (RSP).** This is the price that with reasonable discussions could be achieved.
- ☞ **Lowest Settlement Point (LSP).** This is your final offer and a price that you will not go below. Your expenses may be covered but the fees could be regarded as less than reasonable.

Bear in mind that your prospective customer will also have in their minds settlement points or prices.

Figure 8 illustrates the notional bargaining position with regard to the Southend gig illustrated in Figure 6 (page 8). In the diagram below you can see the potential for agreement on price.



*Figure 8: Agreeing Band Fees*

The hatched area shows the area of potential agreement. The band will not shift below £400 (the band's Lowest Settlement Point) and the customer will not shift any higher than £440 (the customer's Lowest Settlement Point). Mutual gain is found at £420, between Lowest Settlement Point and Realistic Settlement Point.

Once the fee has been agreed, including accommodation if required, the transaction needs to be completed with details of the gig. Set out below is a check list taken from the sales/gig sheet in Figure 7.

- ☞ Fee
- ☞ Who is the contract made out to?
- ☞ Publicity contact
- ☞ Publicity deadlines for -
  - Photographs
  - Press Releases
  - Leaflets and/or posters
- ☞ Get-In time
- ☞ Technical requirements - added as a Schedule to the Contract
- ☞ Sound Check time
- ☞ Performance times
- ☞ Get-Out time

## **STEP 6: RAISING PROFILE, REACHING THE AUDIENCE & DEVELOPING A FOLLOWING**

Your efforts up to now have been concerned with securing gigs. The next group of tasks is aimed at raising your profile, reaching your audiences and developing a following.

To achieve this you will need to develop materials that can be used by the media to help you and promoters reach your audiences and build audiences for future gigs.

### **Raising Profile**

For your work in raising your profile in the media you will need two sets of materials, photographs and press releases.

#### *Photographs*

Photographs are important for two reasons. The first is that newspapers, magazines and periodicals may print them or at least hold them on file for future use. Secondly venues, festivals etc will, if the quality is good enough, print them in their brochures.

The photographs should be interesting, not too posed and need to be close up shots. Size of photograph should be 8" x 6" or 10" x 8".

There are good photographers out there who are reasonably priced and there are a number of photo reproduction companies who can knock out a couple of hundred copies at a fair price that will not break you such as Walker Prints, Denby Repros, etc.

If you are having photographs professionally shot, then at the same time have a couple of colour transparencies done. Although copies of transparencies are expensive compared to reproductions of black and white, many promoters, festivals, magazines and weekend colour supplements prefer them. Rather than mail out expensive transparencies to all and sundry, you can always include on your press release and details to promoters that colour transparencies of the band are available.,

#### *Press Releases*

John Fordham, jazz critic of *The Guardian* has kindly allowed us to reprint his article Jazz and the Press, originally carried in the Jazz Services *Jazz Musicians Guide 1992*:

"In this country, jazz music has never enjoyed anything remotely similar to the press access extended to rock and pop, classical music or opera. Often without professional management or public relations backup, jazz musicians are forced to take care of their own publicity, and try to wrestle back from reluctant or indifferent editors a few inches of all that space apparently so casually thrown to more mainstream musics.

"Nobody is being killed in the rush to sign up as a jazz journalist either, because the returns don't materially sustain life much better than being a jazz musician does. So the work is still done, as it always has been, by a largely amateur assortment of enthusiasts, most of them with day jobs that have nothing to do with jazz, squeezing the music in where they can and often having exactly the same problems convincing editors on busy arts-desks as you do.

"But though this situation is a long way from perfect, musicians can improve the odds on getting coverage for their work. Here are some points to bear in mind.

"1. Start by trying to identify the individuals with special responsibility for jazz in the publications you want to get covered in. Newspaper offices are busy places, and material without any obvious home often remains homeless forever, so if you can get your publicity on to a named correspondent's desk, that's a head start. Remember too that most newspaper jazz writers are freelancers, so your stuff will have to be forwarded to them at home or await collection, so send date-tied information well in advance. If the newspaper you're aiming at operates a listing service, as well as review of preview coverage, send the stuff to the listings editor and to the journalist. Never assume that one will pass it on to the other, because they often don't. Moreover, space in a newspaper needs booking by the writer at least a fortnight in advance, and preferably longer. Don't offer to hassle the writer's editor yourself to get the space, it's completely counter-productive.

"2. Presentation is very important. It doesn't have to look like a company report or a job application, but an illegible scrawl on the back of an envelope has a lot stacked against it. Write clearly, or preferably type it or get somebody to type it for you. Don't mug the writer with a package like *War and Peace*, but don't be too skimpy either. A paragraph of biographical information about yourself and your musicians is always helpful for annotating listings or adding weight to a review and you don't have to write this afresh every time you send out information. Get a couple of pages of standard biography done, make a lot of copies, and keep using it until it needs updating.

"3. Accuracy. Put the dates, times, prices and full venue address, with enquiry telephone numbers very prominently on the material. If a journalist has to ring up to get information that should have been there in the first place, it's not good PR, and it just might not get done at all.

"4. If you're a new band, don't expect a writer to put in a plug for you on spec, or worse still to repeat a gushing press handout you've sent in. Journalists like to feel that objectivity still means something, even if it isn't always clear what it means. Your early gigs need to get reviews, which you can quote in your subsequent publicity, or send to prospective promoters or record companies. Previews are unlikely with unknown bands, but a demo tape is very helpful and you should get a batch made for journalists once you think you're ready to be heard.

"5. Space out your communications with journalists in a diplomatic manner. In other words, don't ring every other day, and don't lose your temper if you can possibly help it. If a freelance is happy to give you a home number (and they nearly always will do this, to cut down on the risk of lost material and delays through

sending stuff via the office) call in the day-time unless you've been assured it's OK not to, or the person can only be reached at night. Jazz may be a nocturnal activity, but not all enthusiasts for this unconventional music are so unconventional that they don't have families or partners, so your half-hour monologue at midnight about the loneliness of the artist will usually be unpopular at the other end.

"6. If you think you've been stitched up in your coverage, or unfairly maligned, think twice before you set fire to the telephone lines. Journalist's copy, particularly freelancers' copy, may be cut or changed by the sub-editors in a way that utterly changes the sense, and the writer is completely blameless and unable to control it. Also, the writer is entitled to express any reasonable opinion about your work and, whether you like it or not, it's something that any professional artist has to live with. If you feel that you have been savaged by an ignoramus or someone with malicious intent, which is unlikely, you can write to the letter columns of the newspaper, or in an extreme case to the writer's commissioning editor, usually the arts editor. But remember that jazz correspondents are few and far between, and such jazz coverage as newspapers do run is usually there because someone who cares is rooting for it - so if you try to campaign for getting a jazz writer bounced from their job, remember that it's not impossible the paper will never bother to replace this person at all, rather than automatically look for a better one.

"What is always eligible for redress or correction in the pages of the paper is factual error. This does not mean "your correspondent says my music is terrible, but I can tell you it's fantastic", it means the correcting of the wrong biographical information, wrong line-ups to bands etc., etc.

"It may not always seem as if jazz musicians and jazz correspondents are a partnership, it's true. You want to feel wanted, and so do we, so good luck in your pursuit of those precious column inches!

**(John Fordham)**

### *Press Deadlines*

It is very important that you agree deadlines for press releases and promotional materials with the customer and ensure that these materials reach your customer well before the appointed deadlines (see Figure 7).

There are standard deadlines for monthly, weekly and daily publications. Rules of thumb deadlines are:

- ☞ 3 months' copy deadline for quarterly publications.
- ☞ 2 months' copy deadline for bi-monthly and monthly publications.
- ☞ 1 month copy deadline for weekly publications.
- ☞ 1 week for daily publications.

### **Reaching the Audience**

#### *Press Pack*

Your customer whether promoter, venue, festival etc. will want a press pack. Your press pack should contain the following -

- ☞ Press releases with dates, venues and box office numbers.
- ☞ Publicity photographs and notice of availability of colour transparencies.
- ☞ Up to the minute biographies.
- ☞ Latest reviews - please note press reviews, not previews. Sending previews with your press pack is a waste of time.

*Posters, leaflets and Media Ads*

At this point you have to ask yourself what can you afford and what does the promoter prefer?

*Posters*

Posters can be knocked out at a reasonable price for design and print that contain a message about the band and a visual image. Space can be left at the bottom of the poster for venues to overprint their details.

*Leaflets*

Leaflets are only good when touring X number of dates that are close together. However, leaflets can be printed both sides and contain visual images and a lot more in terms of promotional messages than posters. A string of dates also looks impressive, not only to prospective attenders but to the media as well. However, everything boils down to what you can afford.

*Media Advertisements*

Media ads can be expensive and there are hidden costs, for example some magazines require camera-ready artwork. If you do manage to find the money for a modest advertisement be very careful in selecting the magazine or publication. The question you have to ask is: "will that publication reach the audience that I want to reach?" - ie your target audience. You therefore need to balance cost against circulation - not only in terms of numbers, but geographic spread, and your target audience. It pays to study the "rate card" of the publication that will give you this information and always ask for a discount.

**Developing a Following**

On each gig you do it is worthwhile collecting the names and addresses of punters who would like to be kept informed on the band. These people can then be mailed with a newsletter that keeps them informed of the band's progress. In terms of the costs of promoting your band you will need to examine carefully what you are able to afford and spread the cost over a number of gigs. However, it is essential that you provide the promoter with a press pack including press releases, latest reviews and photographs.

**STEP 7: AFTER SALES**

The final part of the process is "after sales" service. Thank the promoter after the gig and when you get home drop them a line. Put a note in your sales sheet to mail them with updates on the band's progress within five months of the gig. Remember always be nice to people on the way up, you will need them on the way down.