

3 Keys to Fan List Success

#1. Own YOUR List!

We can't say this enough to musicians. Having MySpace or Facebook friends is not a real fan list. Same with Twitter. They are all great services and each has a different purpose, but how much of the actual real info do you have of your 'fans/friends/followers' on those places? Can you easily view a list of everyone's real name, email address, location, phone number, etc? The answer is no, yet many musicians forget this because the service is the hot internet site of the moment and everyone says "Oh, you need to be on [insert site here]."

Your band should have a presence on these social networks (more on that in a later post), but you need to use these services to feed people to YOUR fan list. Fan Relationship Management services like FanBridge give clients html code that let them put a signup form on their MySpace, Facebook, website, etc, so their fans can sign up direct to the band's own list.

Once you have built your own list, you can do amazing things with it that you couldn't do otherwise...things like:

- Targeting messages by zip code and radius (so you don't need to blast your whole list)
- Scheduling messages to be sent at a certain time
- Grouping fans based on custom criteria (street team, bloggers, groupies, etc)
- Tracking your messages to see who opens, clicks, and much more
- Tons of other cool features that save you time and build your career.

#2. Communicate Regularly

Most musicians know they should regularly communicate with their fans, yet they are often at a loss for things to say. We're here to tell you that you shouldn't be stuck on what to say, but rather make sure you talk to your fans on a regular basis! Why do fans signup for your list? To hear from you!

Don't be boring and only tell them about this show, that show, and your new album. Tell them about YOU. They want to be fans of your music AND you as a person. Talk about great movies you've seen recently. Talk about other artist's albums you've recently listened to. Come up with a "special" city of the week/month and explain why.

When we look at the fan list size of artists who communicate regularly and artists who don't, it becomes very clear. The artists who talk to their fans regularly (whether it is once every two weeks or once a month) have lists that are constantly growing and have better interaction (opens/clicks). Artists who send an email every few months because

they have “nothing to talk about” are ones whose list sizes either stay flat or actually decrease.

Make sure to use a service, like FanBridge, that includes a “Forward to a Friend” link in the footer of every campaign. This lets fans easily pass your message on to their fans and services like ours will allow you to track who is doing it. It’s a best practice to take this info and reward those people that are spreading the word about you. They’re likely your most avid fans, and rewarding them will incentivize them to continue to promote you and your music among their own groups of friends.

#3. Include Links to Places You Want Fans to Go

This one seems obvious, but you’d be surprised at how many bands do not include a link to their website in each message. Not only should you be including a link to your website, but you should have a link to your MySpace/ Facebook/ Twitter/etc profile, your merch store, a place where they can download your music, your tour dates, and anything else that’s important. You’ll be surprised how much more traffic you get when you start including links.

A service like ours will make it as easily as possible for clients to include links in their campaigns. For example, by checking one box, you can automatically include links to buy your music. We also track every link you put in a campaign, so you can see EXACTLY who clicked on which link in your message, and when they clicked. This is very valuable info, and will help you target future campaigns to specific people based on their past actions.

Bonus Tip!

#4. Go Professional

Don’t try and do it yourself using outlook/ apple mail/ gmail/ msn/ hotmail/ yahoo/ aol/ entourage/ custom server scripts. Unless your core skills are computer programming, email/mobile deliverability, and related things, you are probably better off leaving the fan list management to a professional service and focusing on what you do best: making and playing music. There are a few providers out there (some suck, some are great), and obviously we’re partial to FanBridge for a band’s fan relationship management needs. You want something that’s simple, intuitive, and will help you to easily and efficiently maximize that relationship between your fans and your music. And you don’t need to pay an arm and leg these days to get that.