

The Ministry of Praise Incorporated offers - A Resource Guide for Successful Concert Promotion

Following is a compilation of resources and ideas that will help you in developing an effective plan for promoting your concert. These resources offer suggestions that will maximize the success of your concert and help expand the effectiveness, quality and outreach opportunity for your ministry and ours. Your efforts in preparing and implementing a plan for the promotion of your concert, is essential to its success. The results can be significant. Our mutual goal is not to have just a concert but an event that will be life-changing for those attending.

Begin by keeping your concert lifted up in prayer. Seek the Lord's guidance in all the decisions you make regarding it. Enlist volunteers for a prayer team from your staff and congregation that will pray through to the end of the event.

After confirming the date, place and time of your concert, you can immediately begin planning your concert promotion. Develop a team of volunteers and delegate responsibilities using the following resource guide. Six to eight weeks ahead of your proposed date is the minimum time required to effectively 'advance' a successful concert event. It is important that every possible avenue is used to let all potential attendees know of this event. 80% of an events success is 100% of the promoter's involvement. We appreciate you!

The first task for your team is gathering an exhaustive media list. This list should contain all the newspapers within a three or four county area, all TV and radio stations that serve your area, community based magazines, free shopper newspapers, activities calendars, cable shows, schools and their publications, singles groups, support groups, Christian colleges and their publications, youth programs, etc. Does your community have a free to the public community events calendar brochure? If so you want your event listed in this as well. A list of churches in your area that are willing to include an announcement in their weekly bulletin (recommended for the last 2 Sundays before the concert) or monthly newsletter is very helpful as well. Contact local businesses that might want to "Sponsor" the concert. All of these should have up-to-date information including title/position of contact person, name of business, address, city, zip, phone number, email, and web site address if applicable.

RESOURCES

Personal Invitation/Word of Mouth Campaign - A personal invitation from a friend offers the most effective advertising and it is free! It is important to get your staff and people around you enthused so they will tell others about the concert.

- Try innovative ways of word of mouth advertising, such as telling your staff, church group and your close circle of friends about the concert and encouraging them to tell at least two people about the concert, and then those people can call at least two people and so on.
- Contact the Worship Pastor in as many churches as you can and ask them to put the concert on their calendars. They are often very supportive in helping to share information with their congregations by announcing the event during church services and posting the event in the bulletin. Ask if you can send posters to put up in their church to advertise the concert. The support of churches and youth pastors is vital.

Printed Posters/Pictures - It is important to communicate your concert to the community with quality promotional materials. The first impression you make should not be secondary. We live during a time of high tech advertisement. People relate to quality advertisement for quality products. Think about what appeals to your eye the most, black and white photo copies or full color glossy pictures. We have professionally designed posters in several sizes for your event that can be downloaded and printed/copied. Check with your local printing company and see if they would sponsor/partner printing your posters in exchange for advertising their business on them.

- Concert Posters should go up two to three weeks prior to the event. Assign volunteers to post the posters in places likely to attract the most attention. They should be placed on public bulletin boards and displayed by willing businesses and other churches. We suggest local grocery stores, arcades, malls, Chick-Fil-A restaurants, and any Christian owned businesses. Try local chamber of Commerce offices, Art Councils or other communities, shopping plazas, music stores, book stores, galleries and other popular gathering spots where posters are displayed routinely but be sure to ask for permission before posting.

- Do not forget to post the posters to the concert location itself! Try to hang posters as close to the average eye level as possible.
- Many will slight this part of the promotion effort. The poster advertising effect depends on repetition. Most place 10 - 20 posters and think that is sufficient. A few fliers will be invisible to the public-at-large. Consider posting them across several counties. Which newspapers do you plan to advertise in? What is their geographic circulation? Post the posters so that folks seeing your ad will then notice your posters - and vice versa! Posters are an important part of promoting an event and should be used generously.
- Pass out posters at other Christian concerts and events in the weeks preceding your concert or event.

Website/Internet/Email - With today's technology, it is easy to develop a very professional concert announcement with little effort or expertise needed. This is an effective and free resource for promoting your concert. Use the digital promotional materials available on our website.

- Email Blasts - are an effective way of notifying a large number of individuals in a relatively short amount of time. Provide this concert announcement to your congregation and have them share it with their friends. It is a personal way to make contact without being intrusive.
- Website Advertisement – if your church, organization, or association has a website, draw attention to your concert with a banner advertisement that includes the concert information and contact information.
- When you are online, subscribe to any music-related newsgroups or bulletin boards. Post messages about your anticipation, plans and specific information about the event.

Radio – Radio stations within 30 to 60 miles of your event are a great source of reaching a broader audience that might not be reached through personal invitation, direct mail or by email.

- Free time is sometimes available on radio stations as Public Service Announcements and community billboards or calendars. Send a press release (available on our website) and a cover letter (a letter from yourself announcing the concert and your sponsorship) to all the stations in your area, and use a follow-up call to the News Director and/or Public Service Director to see if they are running your free announcement.
- Request Praise Inc. Interview – many times radio stations are open to doing interviews with the Artist which helps promote the event. These interviews can be done by phone. This is most effective within two weeks of your concert event. Of course, give priority to Christian stations that may already be playing Praise Inc. Radio advertising should be done first with your area's Southern Gospel stations and any Country stations that play Southern Gospel Music.
- Provide Station with Praise Inc.'s latest CD – If the radio station will play Praise Inc. but they do not have their CD, contact our office to request a CD for the station. Please provide name of station, contact, address, and phone number. Airplay cannot be overemphasized. Please request all of the stations that you work with to substantially increase their airplay of the groups' material the month before the concert. They will normally do this, especially for advertising, giveaways and station involvement.
- Personally invite radio station employees to attend. You might consider inviting the most popular radio DJ in your area to be your emcee for the event. If radio stations personnel do attend make sure you acknowledge them. This not only helps you but also helps their station as well.
- Give-Away Promotions – In exchange for advertisement and help in announcing your event, provide the station with some of Praise Inc.'s CDs for giveaway to their listeners. Please contact our office to request a CD for the station. Please provide name of station, contact, address, and phone number. Give-away promotions are very successful. In exchange for each give-away item, the concert should be mentioned at least three times (30 seconds prior to the give-away and twice during the actual give-away.) Restrict each give-away to no less than 30 minutes apart. Make sure the station keeps a list of all the winners for your mailing list. On the key stations, a paid advertising schedule, along with giveaways can be a powerful combo, and in many cases, the station will "pay" you for these give-away items by giving you discounts on your spots.
- Contact your local Christian radio station and ask them if they would "Partner" with you on this concert. Ask them if they would be the "Welcome" station ("Welcome Station" promotions should be done with the key station in your market. This means that a particular station will give you twice or three times as much exposure for a set fee in exchange for their call letters being listed on all tickets, posters, flyers, etc., as well as agreeing to let their most popular DJ emcee the event. Innovative bartering can be worked out with stations in this way." Look for a win/win situation with them. We recommend 100 to 150 sixty second spots over a 4-6 week period. If that is cost prohibitive, then start running spots 4 weeks out, with no spots 3 weeks out, & heavy promotion during the last 2 weeks. Get rates and ask for discounts and special promotion policies. Sometimes by placing

their logo on your promotional items, they will give substantial discounts for on-air advertising and underwriting.

- Have members of your staff or friends call the request line, regularly requesting the songs. This will more than likely generate airplay, which is great promotion for your concert.
- Solicit a news story or possible feature story to run several days prior to the concert. Obtain a press kit and take it to the News Director; then try to set up a phone interview with a group member through our office. Remember, radio interviews are most effective when done during the week of the concert.
- Do you have a music store or CD store in your area? It is never too early to notify local stores that you have a date scheduled in their backyard. Stores are often open to this type of cross promotion. The sooner they know, the more likely it is that they can schedule us for an in-store promotion, CD signing or other creative promotional event.

Direct Mail – If done properly, direct mailings can get better results per dollar than any other type of advertisement. Develop a professional but simple postcard that shares as much information about your event as possible. Send this announcement to local churches, businesses, radio stations, newspapers, and to your congregation. A small post card is something that can easily be kept and posted on a Fridge or bulletin board as a reminder of the event. Bulk rate mailings need to be sent no later than 4 weeks before the concert and preferably 6 weeks before the event.

- A mailing list should include key individuals involved in local church groups and other organizations. Even if your organization has a mailing list, consider identifying other organizations in your area that have lists as well. Ask them if you can borrow their list or if they would let you insert an announcement about your event - churches, local committees, area music associations etc. All these groups have mailing lists *Don't forget email lists and web sites in your area that include community events calendars.*
- When doing the actual mailing, experts have determined that the more the correspondence is personalized, the better the response. Many software packages include mail-merge capabilities. You should make full use of these capabilities when preparing your piece to be mailed.
- Acquire mailing labels from a company like Williams Direct (Telephone: 620-364-8431) or American Church Lists (888-733-1812) and purchase mailing labels for a regional church mailing to churches within 100 miles of the concert location. Be sure to use their CHURCH mailing list. Their list is an interdenominational listing, which guarantees that ALL denominations will be represented in your mass mailing. Williams Direct can assist you in designing a mailing list that will be most beneficial to your concert. We recommend that you mail at least two to three times the venue capacity. If the venue holds 500, send between 1000- 1500 mailers. It is vital that your mailings arrive at least six weeks prior to the concert or event. When sending a mailing of this size you can get a bulk rate discount. Use your church or organization non-profit permit (if applicable) to get the lowest postal rate possible. You must give the post office substantial time to ensure your mailing arrives on the determined schedule; bulk mail usually takes at least three weeks to arrive.
- Mail out your mailing to all the churches in your area. Use volunteers to help with your bulk mailing or you can contact a Company like NuPrint or DSI; they offer mailing services to Promoters for a very reasonable fee.

Newspaper – Newspapers are one of the best advertisements available at very little to no cost. Editors normally welcome news releases and feature stories on upcoming community events. You will want to contact the Church & Religion editor, as well as the Entertainment editor of all the papers. Suggest possibly doing an interview / feature story on Praise Inc. or even possibly a CD review.

- Send your press release three weeks prior to your concert. **Please use the press release available on our website.** Often, promoters are unfamiliar with proper press release structure, but you can believe the newspaper editors are familiar with the proper structure. If you do not know the proper structure, seek out public relations and business communications texts in your local library for the proper structure. It will be well worth your time to do so because improperly structured press releases usually find the circular file. Note: When following up with the newspaper, never ask a media person if they got your information. Instead, state that you sent the release and would like to present a unique story for consideration. Then tell them about the event.
- Send out 8X10 black and white photos of Praise Inc. with each press release. Photos are popular with editors and readers. We have one available for download at our website.
- By all means, do not overlook the trade papers when deciding on your print advertising. The trades can be affective in advertising your event to the people who would be interested in attending.

- You might even try an ad in the classified section. Be creative, for example, Wanted – people who enjoy music etc.

Television – As far as reaching the maximum number of people, television is the most effective media in which to advertise. However, it can also be very expensive. Many cable companies reserve a channel specifically airing Public Service Announcements (PSA) and community calendars. Make sure you utilize this free form of advertising.

- Daytime talk shows can be approached about the possibility of a short segment featuring your Gospel concert.
- When using television, make sure you supply whatever footage you need on 3/4 inch tape. The difference in quality of 3/4 inch and other sizes is quite appreciable.

Christian Bookstores – Many Christian bookstores have bulletin boards listing upcoming events in the area. Make sure they list your concert. Also, ask if you can leave them some flyers or concert posters to be placed near the checkout counter and/or used to insert into a shopping bag with a purchase.

Creative Marketing -no cost or low cost ideas

- Does your town have a restaurant where the morning coffee club gathers? Why not ask the owner to run a copy of our CD over their music system. Ask if you can place a sign by the cash register telling patrons what they have been listening to and where they can hear more!
- How about picking up the cost of everyone's morning drink during breakfast hours. Ask if you can supply the restaurant with table tents telling them why their morning cup of coffee was complimentary.
- Ask if your local grocery store would be willing to insert a 'drop in' postcard about the concert in patron's grocery bags upon checkout. Offer to supply them and mention the store's name - for example on one side your message, on the other "Thank you for shopping at Pat's Thriftway"
- Would your local bank or telephone company be willing to include an announcement about the concert when they send out statements - possibly in exchange for a sponsorship mention on the poster flier or in the concert program?
- What other events will your community have at which you can set out concert fliers or make a public invitation to your event? Church Suppers? Bingo night? Scouting Meetings? Rotary Meetings? Start a list!
- Contact potential sponsors like pizza delivery companies or anyone who does deliveries to post your event flyer on all pizza boxes.

PROMOTION TIMELINE:

When it is possible, six to eight weeks ahead of your proposed date is the minimum time required to effectively 'advance' a concert event. Here are some general guidelines that you can use to prepare for your concert.

From the date of booking up to 6 to 8 weeks before the concert:

- Develop a team of volunteers. Begin prayer for the event, through to the end of the event.
- Develop your Media list of regional Radio, Newspaper and Television companies and contact them. Interviews with Praise Inc. should be scheduled for 1 to 2 weeks before the concert.
- Develop a contact list of regional churches and contact them. Provide them with concert information, concert posters, Praise Inc.'s press release for them to include in their bulletins and on their website. In larger populated areas, this can take some time but is worth the effort.
- Direct mail promotions should be done now.
- Send out an E-Mail campaign to the church congregation. Suggest in the email that all recipients forward to those they wish to invite.
- If you have a website. Place a banner advertising the concert on your homepage.
- Begin personal invitations. Suggest that the congregation invite 2 people and then ask those two people to invite two people etc.
- Pass out posters at other Christian concerts and events in the weeks preceding your concert or event.

From 4 to 6 weeks before the concert:

- Airplay cannot be overemphasized. Please request all of the stations that you work with to substantially increase their airplay of Praise Inc.'s CD the month before the concert.
- Continue personal invitations.
- Send announcements to all free publications (activities calendars, church bulletins, newspapers, radio, TV, cable shows, schools, youth programs, etc.).

From 2 to 4 weeks before the concert:

- Check with some of the direct mail recipients to see if they received your mailing.
- Follow up with area church staff and congregations. The churches should have posters and concert information posted. List concerts in the bulletins on the 2 Sundays before the concert.
- All local retailers should have concert posters displayed now. Check them frequently to make sure they have not been covered and replace them if necessary. Post them in as many places as possible. It is recommended that you place a large emphasis on this part of your promotion.
- Begin your radio, newspaper and television/cable advertising campaign.
- Confirm with radio stations interviews with Praise Inc. have been scheduled.
- Send press releases to the religion and entertainment editors of all local newspapers. These are available on Praise Inc.'s website
- Continue personal invitations.

From 1 to 2 weeks before the concert:

- Send reminder email campaign to the congregation and have them send out reminders to those they forwarded invitations to.
- Confirm arrival times and last minute details with Praise Inc. Make sure all arrangements at the church/venue have been completed.
- If hotel rooms are being offered. Have them reserved and prepaid in Praise Inc.'s name and provide a confirmation number.
- If radio stations are doing give away promotions to their listeners, they should start now. Contact Praise Inc. directly to request them.
- Continue personal invitations.
- It is time to check back with media contacts to make sure all materials have arrived and whether the editors have decided to place photo and/or press release in the appropriate sections. Don't think of this as pestering these editors, think of it as being thorough. Timely follow-up simply gives your event a better chance of inclusion, and even a better chance of more prominent placement.

Week before the concert:

- Continue personal invitations.
- Plan a party for all who have helped with this event. If we are not pressed for time to get to our next concert, we love to have a time of fellowship with those who have attended after the concert.
- Continue personal invitations.

Day of the concert:

- Finish anything that has not been completed.
- Continue personal invitations.
- Make sure the church/venue is open and ready for Praise Inc.'s time of arrival.

Praise Incorporated would like to thank you for your support. We appreciate your efforts in promoting this event and partnering with us. Concerts are the very life-blood of our ministry. We look forward to this event that is an opportunity for your ministry to reach out to your community for the Lord. Please contact us with any questions you may have. We will be happy to help you.

Until the whole world hears,

From all of us at Praise Incorporated