

How To Make Money By Giving Away Your Music For Free

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This is a no fluff strategy guide that will show you a cool technique to use to sell more of your music while you're giving it away at the same time. It sounds counter-intuitive, but here's a great way to pull it off.

#1) BUILD YOUR EMAIL DATABASE

You can give your music away for free all day long and not make a single red cent, which is how most bands do it. The problem is even if you have a lot of traffic and have a great song - people come, take what they want and then you'll never hear from them again in 99% of the cases.

This is a short term tactic that leaves you 'hoping and praying' that someone who got your music for free is willing to come back and buy more from you in the future. Chances are, even if they would like to - they'll eventually get distracted and forget all about your website. Maybe if you have the ID tags set up properly they'll come back, but you definitely don't want to wait around. Building a long term business means you need to think twice before handing out your music for free.

You need to collect an email address before you give out any freebies - etch this into your brain now. This way you're building up a list and narrowing the freebie seekers from those that are willing to give up their email address from those who wouldn't. If they won't trust you enough to leave you a valid email, then you definitely don't want them on your list.

Resource: www.mailchimp.com

This is a free email software that allows you to set up email capture forms, build up a database and use auto responders to build up a relationship with your list. It's 100% free for your first 1,000 emails that you collect.

2) PRICING/POSITIONING STRATEGY

Here's something that I learned from CJ Parker of the Upsell Equation. You can get far more sales by the way you position your offer and can strongly influence how a customer will respond if you do it right.

This is how it works:

You offer three choices, one is free and the other two are not. One of these offers is the one you want your customer to choose and one of these offers is the decoy - it's just there to make #3 look good.

Here's an example.

- Plain sandwich \$.99
- **Toasted** sandwich - \$4.99
- **Toasted sandwich, salad & cookie** - ~~\$6.99~~ **\$5.00 today only!**

Before we get into the strategy behind this, can you pick out the cheap, premium and the decoy?

You have the loss-leading offer of a plain sandwich for .99 cents, you'd obviously prefer that most people don't take you up on it because you won't make much money that way.

Then you have the premium (and best value) offer for \$5.00 - this is the one you want to sell the most of. It's bolded and also discounted from the regular price - for every one of these that sell you just made 4x the amount of the first offer.

Lastly, you have the decoy - the toasted sandwich. This is the offer that you don't even intend to sell one of, but it sits there right in the middle of the other two offers and helps to make your premium offer look good in terms of value.

So why make three different offers if only two of them are valid? Simple - you want to give the illusion of choice. If you only make two offers, it becomes an either/or situation. If the prospect feels that you have a motive to push the higher priced offer they may intentionally avoid being 'sold to' by choosing the lower priced offer or possible even not choosing either offer at all.

Using this technique has allowed for some people to get as much as 96% more people opting for the premium price point - so it's worth trying with your offers as well.

Let's apply this technique to music now:

The best way to do this is to promote a song or even better yet - an EP or full album for free. Just say something like "Get <Insert Album Title here> for free! Click here!" or something like that.

"Free" is a very powerful word - most of us have a hard time saying no to anything that's free. So the numbers will probably go down on the application of this technique in the music industry instead of other markets. However, in order to get people's attention with something like an MP3 download which is perceived as being low value (thanks to Apple iTunes pricing all MP3's at .99cents) chances are you'll have to go with FREE to make this work.

So you prospects will click and arrive at a page that gives them the three offers:

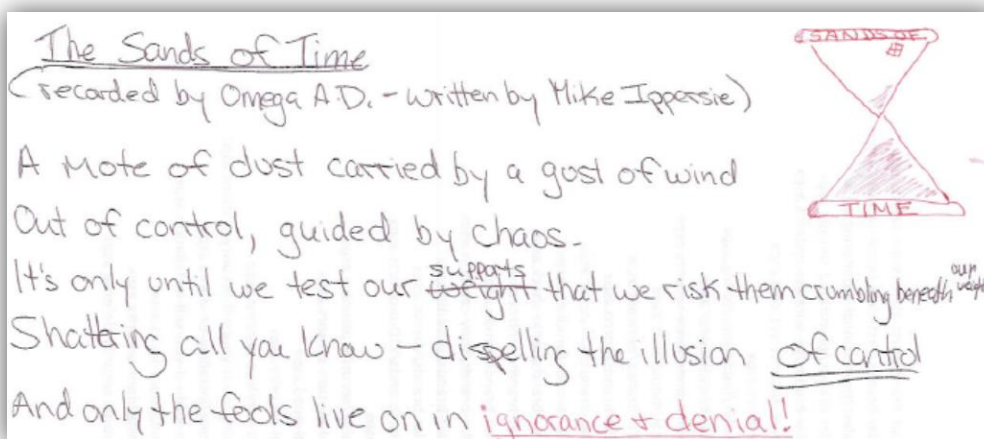
- Free MP3
- **FLAC** file \$3.99
- **FLAC & MP3 files plus lyrics** ~~\$5.99~~ **\$4.00** (only 100 copies)

Now the freebie seekers are still going to be content to take the free MP3, however, some of them are going to take you up on the 'deal' of both format types for \$3.99! This is much better than what you're going to get from iTunes!

There is further opportunity here as well for those that like to think outside the box.

When you offer the lyrics you can simply type them up and save them as a PDF - but you can also kick it up a notch and write them by hand (legibly of course) along with little doodles or whatever on the page. If you're artistic at all, you can do some artwork along the borders of the page or whatever. Then all you have to do is scan the sheet into PDF format - now you have something that is much more personal and 'cool' in the eyes of a fan. You can even incorporate color by using blue or even red ink to make it even more visually appealing.

Check it out:



Don't have a scanner? Go to any UPS store or local copy store and they'll convert up to 50 pages into a PDF for \$5 (tip - do all your lyrics at the same time to get your money's worth!).

Now compare THAT PDF to some lyrics just typed on the page - which do you think is going to appeal more to someone who loves your music?

You can also take it another level - Andy Rogers at www.viralgigs.com mentioned the cool idea of making your own videos by using MS Powerpoint and recording a slide presentation of your music along to the images that you choose; these could have to do with the lyrical content or just be random photos of your band. You can record this video within Powerpoint or by using screen capture software (like www.jingproject.com) for free.

Don't have a copy of Powerpoint? You can easily download Open Office for free and use their software instead!

None of these ideas cost much, but can translate into far more money in your pocket by adding value and appealing to what your fans want. Your fans will be different than the fans of other bands and the better you understand them the better you'll be able to anticipate what they want. Heck, you can ask them directly since they'll be on your mailing list.

As for those freebie seekers - they aren't a complete write off because you'll have collected their email address in order to deliver them the free song(s) they requested. Sure, they can always unsubscribe - but you'll otherwise still have the chance to engage with them and possibly swing them over to becoming a buyer.

Last tip before we move on, never cut your price! When you're dealing with MP3s and music, you're already dealing with something that is undervalued - don't slash your prices further. Always offer more value to justify the expense and your fans will thank you. One last way to add value to your premium offer is to strip the audio from a live Youtube video (one that has decent sound quality and yet still sounds 'live' would be ideal) and bundle that in with your premium offer. Make a limited time bonus offer encourage your prospects to take action.

It's not enough to make a good deal, you have to also give your list incentive to motivate them to buy. That's just the way it is, adapt to it and make it work in your favour while giving them terrific value for their money.

3) THE POWER OF FREE

It's hard for many artists to come to grips with offering their creations for free online, but those who are willing to embrace this strategy outlined above are virtually assured of more sales than those who do not.

The first task to build a sustainable business is to grow your database before you worry about making a sale. Promote your free offer where your targeted fans hang out (you do know where they hang out don't you?) on forums, blogs and on other band websites; use a signature link and interact with the communities by asking and answering questions and being involved. People will eventually find their way to your product offer - make sure the word "FREE" is visible and emphasized if possible.

4) THE THANK YOU PAGE

This may also be called the download page. It's the page that the user will be sent to immediately after paying or after confirming their email on your double opt-in list. Guess what - here's another great chance to make some money. You can monetize the page by offering the link(s) to the downloads at the bottom of the page and have affiliate offers for related music on the page as well.

For instance, if your band is heavily influenced by Metallica and your followers also tend to enjoy Metallica's music, you could promote some Amazon Affiliate links to some Metallica CDs or DVDs. You could even take a page out of Amazon's book and make the heading something like - "Others who opted in for these downloads also bought the following:" or something like that. Test it out and see if it works for you.

This is just another way that you can earn money while giving away free music online.

CONCLUSION

So let's recap what we learned about making money by giving away your music for free.

#1) Collect their email address in return for the free music: Having their email enables you to follow up and develop a relationship with them. Don't be afraid to redirect them back to your premium offer repeatedly - it takes 7 or more exposures

to something before most people buy and email lets you do that if you use it the right way.

#2) Offer freebies but also offer paid products with high value: People will click on the link to get FREE music where they can get it but will also be exposed to two paid offers (the decoy and the premium) giving them the option to spend money with you. Always give the option of getting paid and eventually someone will take you up on it.

#3) Monetize your Download/Thank You or Email Confirmation Pages: These pages are a great opportunity for you to present a related offer to your signups. The key word here is RELATED. Most of the people will not buy anything, but a percentage will. The more people you get to visit the page the more opportunity you have that someone will take you up on your offer!

Put these tactics to work for your band and you're guaranteed to make money while giving away your music for free.

There will be many people that take your MP3s and buy nothing, but you'll also get the occasional person who not only takes you up on your premium offer, but also goes on to buy one of the related offers you made; these sales will make up for those who don't buy at all.