

HOW TO “MARKET” YOUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES!

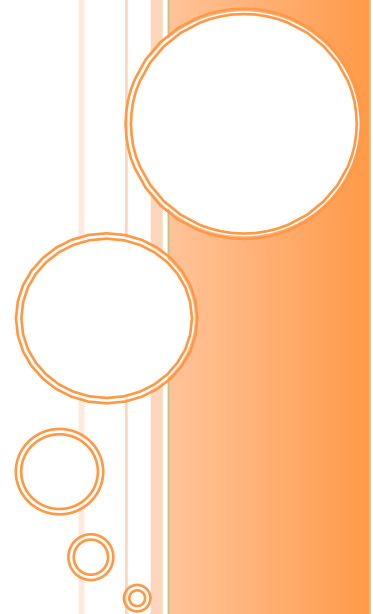
Turning Conference Attendance into a Musical Advantage

Several years ago an artist going to a Folk Alliance conference asked me for suggestions on how best to be successful at the conference. Since that time, I have continually added to my list of suggestions and organized them into activities to be accomplished before, during, and after such conferences. This paper represents the fourth major revision to the initial document and, although it speaks to “Folk Alliance” conferences, it is intended to help artists market their professional services at similar music events.

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Barker House Concerts

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How to “Market” Your Professional Services!

Turning Conference Attendance into a Musical Advantage

This paper has two primary purposes:

- 1) Introduce you to the concept of target marketing.
- 2) Provide you with a number of tips on how best to present (market) yourself and your artistry at Folk Alliances and similar music business events.

While this paper is designed primarily to assist artists, Appendix A is a collection of tips, record-keeping forms, and suggestions for venues as additional information. If you are an artist, you should look at those tips and suggestions for ways to improve your presentation based on what venues are looking for.

Overview

To the uninitiated and unprepared, Folk Alliance (FA) conferences can be more than a bit intimidating. These conferences are a lot like attending a spouse’s family reunion for the first time – everyone (else) knows each other, there’s a lot of hugging, and everyone is really friendly, but they aren’t exactly sure who you are, who you came with, or why you’re there.

Bear in mind that **you are not attending the conference to simply book gigs**, although that does happen all the time. You are there to build relationships with the venues where you want to play and acquaint Folk DJs and Reviewers with your music. Many of the tips and suggestions contained herein mention “venues,” but they also apply to the Folk DJs and journalists that attend as well.

You need to develop the attitude that you are there to develop relationships with your target venues that will lead to mutually rewarding career-long opportunities. Your efforts are NOT like a slot machine with an immediate payoff...they are more like a savings account that you will live on for years to come!

“Develop those relationships with your target venues that will lead to mutually rewarding career-long opportunities.”

At a FA conference a few years ago, someone asked John Flynn, “How’s the conference going for you?” To which he replied, “I’m not sure about THIS one, but LAST year’s is going amazingly well.” *Career development is all about building relationships.*

Thirty years ago, a man who attended my house concerts hired the engineering company where I worked for a project. When I thanked him for the work, he said, “Paul, it’s really simple. We hire our friends. There are a thousand engineers (musicians) out there, but we

give our work to our friends.” That statement changed my entire perspective on the marketing of professional services.

The second major enlightenment for marketing professional services came to me from the director of a national engineering marketing team that I was honored to serve on. He said, “Generally, people are ‘Relevance Blind’ – they are blind to the relevance of what you are saying. You MUST give them some ‘COMPELLING’ reason to want to hire you.”

“If you take away from this paper only one thing, please let it be that you will always seek to convey a COMPELLING reason a venue would want you to perform a professional service for them...your music, your accounting services, or engineering – it makes no difference.”

Embrace the Pledge

If you attend the First Timers orientation sessions that I host, you will be required to take two pledges, so you need to take them now:

First, the *Professional Marketing Pledge*:

“I am a Professional.
I am proud of what I do.
I am not a beggar.”

And, second, the *Official Folk Alliance Pledge*:

“I am not here to book gigs.
I am here to build relationships.
And the gigs will follow.”

Why Are You There???

The artists who attend music conferences can be divided into two basic categories. First, there are the artists that lead full lives outside of music (day job), have families, and perhaps even health insurance. For many years to come, this group of artists will be happy to have one or two gigs a month to fulfill their need to perform. Then there is the second category...those artists who want to move to the next level of financial and professional success in the music business, and want to discover how to do this. This paper is for them.

If you are in that first group of artists, you should enjoy the conferences to the maximum: stay up late; join the jam sessions in the lobby or in rooms after hours; make many friends; and develop relationships with other artists that will get you openers and friendships that will last for many years. If you ARE in that group of artists, have a GREAT time. You need read no further.

However, if you want to move to the next professional level, then you need to approach these conferences as a business endeavor where you **need to work** to justify the thousand dollars or more you (or whoever is supporting your career) spent for you to attend. You will need to get up every morning to attend the business-related meetings and you will need to prepare a marketing plan to effectively put your professional services in front of those in the industry you want to meet (your “targets”). For those that this applies to, read on!

Target Marketing

First, let’s define “target marketing.” Target marketing for a musician/artist is simply focusing your efforts on the venues or “targets” with the most potential to be successful, and, just as important, NOT expending your energies/moneys and efforts on marketing to venues that have little potential for success. Intelligent marketing also means being where you need to be at the right time and being ready to capitalize on an opportunity when it presents itself. To be repeated, “Luck is when opportunity bumps into preparation.” Sounds simple, right? If it were, I wouldn’t get artists contacting me asking if their bluegrass/country/rock/reggae/Klezmer/Christian band could play my house concert series!

So, let’s look at some examples of poor targeting:

- 1) You take out an expensive ad in the Wall Street Journal. Yes, the ad is expensive, but it is seen by millions of people. Unfortunately, the odds are that very, very few of the venues that might book you read the WSJ. The “contact/opportunity” unit cost of your ad is astronomical.
- 2) You have a band that only performs Christian campfire songs, and you mail copies of your CD to the Star of David Coffeehouse and the Sons of Islam Bar and Grill. The CDs go right in the trash.
- 3) Before a conference you email every venue on the pre-registration list and ask them to attend your showcases, and you put those venues on the mailing list for all your upcoming gigs in Pukewanna, Oklahoma. You have now successfully spammed and irritated every venue that you might want to perform for.
- 4) You have a new CD and you mail it to every radio station in your touring area. 90% of the CDs go to stations that don’t play your genre of music and end up in the trash.
- 5) You have an eight-piece rock, country, or reggae band with full drum set and you email all the house concert presenters in the FA directory to ask if they would consider hiring your band. Duh-um.

And now, let's consider some examples of good target marketing:

- 1) You take out a relatively inexpensive ad in the conference program, which is seen and read by hundreds of venues – not all featuring your style of music, but a target-rich environment and your cost/contact is very reasonable.
- 2) You have a Christian music band and/or you have a new CD you want to promote. You check the play list of the radio stations in your desired tour area that play your style of music to determine which DJs showcase bands/artists that are similar to your music. You send your CD to those stations, along with a personal note to the DJs pointing out how your work is similar to those artists they have hosted and asking them to listen to and consider your music.
- 3) You look at the pre-registration list for a conference and identify the venues that are attending from your desired touring area. You look at the websites for the venues to determine what kind of music they host and the artists that have played there. Then you send them a hand-written note that addresses them by name and explains how your artistry is like one or more of the artists they have hosted. If your music seems compatible, you may also include a CD with your personal, focused note.
- 4) During the DJ Reception (or at a time when you meet a venue or media person), instead of just handing them your CD with no printed support documents, like a one-sheet, ask them if they would prefer that you mail them your CD. If they do, then you can include a personal note and a one-sheet promo.

“You don’t have to do too much to be successful because so very many do so little!”

A personal note lets your targets know you spent the extra effort to find out a little about them. It is well worth your time to include these notes in your target marketing efforts, and an absolute fact that an individual cannot throw away a hand-addressed envelope. If you take the time to hand-write their

name AND your return address on the envelope, it WILL be opened. Then, your hand-written note inside captures them and has gotten your art in front of your desired customer.

During these conferences, you will meet many more venue operators at breakfast or at one of the morning sponsored coffees than you will at 2:00 a.m. guerilla showcases or in after-hours jam sessions. At the National FA gatherings, there may be 1,200 artists, and 200 venues and media members – a 6:1 ratio. The ratio of artists to venues at the 2:00 a.m. jam sessions is maybe 300 to 1. During breakfast and morning coffees and seminars, the ratio of artists to venues is maybe 1 artist to 10 venues. Where do you think it makes sense for you to be??

Target marketing is NOT a difficult concept. It just takes preparation and determination.

A National FA conference can be intimidating to the uninitiated; however, if you apply target marketing principles to the attendance list, there will likely be no more than 10-15 individuals that you need to identify as a target, to contact prior to the conference, and to get to attend your showcases. Ten to fifteen venues that book your kind of music, are in your area of travel, and have booked artists similar to you...focus on them and you will hit your target!!

Before, During, and After

While it all may seem like a lot of work, one artist from Oklahoma told me that she identified 30 venues she wanted to target at the national conference, followed the tips in this paper, and had ALL 30 venues come by her FA showcases. Another artist from Austin kept track of all the hours (30) she spent targeting and writing personal letters to venues before the San Diego FA conference, and told me later, “We got a year’s worth of gigs from those contacts.” A third artist followed the tips and now routinely gets between 95 and 100 percent of the venues she invites to her showcases. Of course, all these artists are extremely talented in the first place and that’s what seals the deal, but my goal is just to get you the opportunity to be heard. After that, it’s up to you.

Pre-Conference Activities

You should begin your preparations for the FA International (FAI) conference no later than September of the prior year. The artist who starts to look for showcase opportunities right before this February conference is trying to buy a ticket on a train that has left the station.

Register for the conference as early as possible. Weeks before the conference, venues begin scouring the pre-registration list and sharing “recommendations” among themselves. When I arrive at the national meeting, I usually have the names of at least 20 artists my peers have tagged as “must hear.” If you’re not on the list early, you will lose that opportunity.

When you register for a FA conference and the registration form asks for your “profession,” put down “Artist” or “Singer/Songwriter” so venues can sort the list and find you. Don’t take this moment to demonstrate your cleverness with cute titles like “CEO,” “Empress,” etc. Be clear and to the point.

“State your profession on the registration form as “Artist” or “Singer/Songwriter.” This is not the time for cute titles.”

Showcases are critical, but showcases are nearly useless if you don’t spend the time to get venues to come to them!! If you have never been to a FA conference, it’s also ok to go the first time with no showcases. Instead of trying to invite venue operators who may not know you that first year, attend lots of showcases and meetings, and take copious notes on what is and isn’t successful. Ideally, what follows in

the remainder of this paper is geared to the returning artist who wants to maximize his or her time.

Get your online presence in order:

The following
artists’
internet
were
Cindy Yates
Cancer Fund

“Make it easy to find and contact you.”

tips for
websites and
presence
prepared by
of the Yates
Festival.

These tips are designed to improve your visibility to the many venue hosts who scan the pre-registration list for a preview of the attending artists.

- 1) Google your name as you plan to list it in the program. See where the top 3-5 links go. Be sure you show up under the listing you plan to use.
- 2) Make a LISTEN button on your home page and make it easy to find. DON’T direct your prospective venue to a web location where they can BUY your music! CHECK your link!
- 3) Make sure you have at least 1 or 2 songs available to choose from which are representative of your material.
- 4) Don’t have a Flash intro on your homepage, or, if you do, make it easy to skip through.
- 5) Have links to your Discography and Tour pages and make them text, not graphics or Flash. People are frequently using mobile devices to access the Internet, and text should be searchable by Google, etc.
- 6) Have a YouTube video link so prospective venues can see you performing in front of a live audience.
- 7) Place your contact information on your home page, so it is clearly and easily visible.
- 8) When you make a CD-R, take the time to find out how to put metadata on it. Metadata should have your name, your CD title, and the song names. Frequently, a venue will download CDs to a portable device to be able to listen while at the gym, walking, etc. If your song title and CD name is “Unknown – Track 1,” you have frustrated your potential employer. Including the length of songs in your metadata is extremely helpful to DJs who need that information. Also, if your songs contain any “blue” words including “hell” or “damn,” be sure to write this on the CD to warn a DJ not to play that song if he has a sensitive listenership.

Book your showcases:

As previously stated, for the FAI conference in February, begin lining up your showcases no later than the prior September. Contact the hosts months ahead of time, especially the well-established presenters. Provide the prospective host with a demo CD (but not a promo pack) at the time of your initial contact. Follow religiously any submission rules imposed by the presenter. Be sure to ask what his/her requirements are in your first contact.

Note: reference the “Conference Activities” section of this paper for booking tips.

To find out 5 months before the conference who will probably host showcases, consult the showcase table listings from previous years on the FA website. If the showcase listings are no longer up on the FA site, email the FA staff or borrow a copy of last year’s program from someone who attended and work from it. If you don’t know someone who attended, then use the Internet. No one can hide there. Once you have the names, you will need to contact the presenters. If you are a member of FA, access their online directory of members.

Try to confirm showcases long before the holiday season. Up to a point (2 or 3 a day), the more showcases the better. **Never schedule just 1 or 2 showcases** over the weekend because either or both slots may put you up against a perennial favorite that no one wants to miss. Scheduling multiple showcase times allows venue representatives to hear you at another time, if they have conflicting showcases.

Ideally, **line up 2 or 3 showcases per night**, the earlier in the evening the better. Playing showcases after 1:30 or 2:00 a.m. is basically a worthless effort. Nearly all venue representatives go to bed early so they can get up to take advantage of the morning seminars, hosted coffee sessions, etc. You should be at those meetings/coffees too – along with all the presenters you want to meet!

Playing too many showcases can really wear you out. Racing from room to room, singing until your voice is hoarse, and playing until your fingers are numb can be counter-productive. Too many performers over-schedule themselves, run late to showcases, and perform poorly because they are simply exhausted. You want presenters to see you at your best, right? Why run yourself ragged? Scheduling too many showcases makes each one less of an “event.” If you are seemingly everywhere on the schedule, presenters may feel they can catch you just about any time, so they go listen to someone else and they may not catch you at all.

Scheduling yourself too tightly can also prevent you from “schmoozing” afterward with folks who may want your promo material, or to ask you about your touring schedule and if you can play for them. If you leave yourself some time, you can sit for a few minutes and enjoy the artist who showcases after you. Not only is this a very respectable thing to do, you may also discover someone amazing that you would want to collaborate or tour with.

Although arriving on the day a conference begins will certainly minimize your tangible costs, almost **ALL of the venue people arrive 1 or 2 days earlier** (by Wednesday or

Tuesday for the National FA). The earlier you arrive, the better opportunity you will have to meet the people you most want to target. And, the highest ratio of venues to showcases takes place on those earlier nights: **more fish + smaller barrel = target marketing**. See how this can work to your advantage?

If you are showcasing on Wednesday during the FA International conference, always take the time to personally invite key venue representatives with a pre-conference flyer – call attention to your showcase with a star or a colored dot sticker on the flyer or card. Do so before the conference begins, because it is nearly impossible to do so during the chaos of check-in and registration. Showcases early in the week are the most difficult to promote after you arrive, so do your preparation and outreach before you get to the conference. Showcases late in the week have the lowest ratio of venues-to-artists, but are easiest to promote at the conference because you have time. My advice? Do both.

Be aware of the detailed schedule for the conference and be extremely wary of getting into showcase rooms that “overbook.” You pay the same amount whether you have a good time slot or a lousy one. Some hosts set up showcases, take the prime slots for themselves and their friends, and leave the late night or other dregs for unsuspecting newcomers. Overbooking reduces their costs, or even makes them a small profit, but it screws you. Some showcase sponsors book unsuspecting artists into time slots up against conference-sponsored events or receptions where there may be free beer and wine. You can guess which will get the highest attendance. Don’t get taken!



Ask the sponsor what “treats” they will have in the room for guests to nibble on while they catch your show. A showcase with good snacks can be an oasis as the night wears on. Alcohol isn’t necessary. It is a major expense and a liability that can turn into a real detriment. Bottled water, some cookies, and good coffee can make a showcase room successful and hospitable.

Ask the showcase sponsor about the “Gatekeeper” who ensures that artists stay on schedule. If the sponsor seems lax about the schedule, think twice about being part of it. Venue operators tend to avoid rooms that don’t rigorously follow schedules. Their time is precious at these events and they don’t like to waste it.

Some music conferences are held in hotels that are NOT smoke free. If you attend one of those, avoid showcases on smoking floors. Most venues will not come hear you if they have to endure a smoke-filled room or hallway.

Finally, **if you can’t find a showcase, start your own** and “trade” slots in your showcase with other artist-hosts to increase your exposure. If you create a new showcase room, you will be surprised at the caliber of artists that approach YOU and ask to be part of it. Contacts, mutual interests, openers, and career opportunities will flow from helping others while helping yourself. Post your intended showcase on list-serves for other artists to

respond to. And, if you do host one, be sure to make it a real showcase and not just your personal promotion room, otherwise you may not even get listed in the conference schedule.

Very importantly, learn about artists before offering them time slots and try to attract ones who are more established than you are. The quality of performers associated with your showcase will be a reflection on you by association. People will respect you even if they haven't heard of you. And, as host, don't play more than 2 or 3 of your slots on a given date.



“Book”

Book flights as far in advance as possible to save money. Sadly, those who can least afford it wait the longest to purchase plane tickets and conference registrations, and thus end up paying the most. If you plan to save or borrow money to attend a conference, start doing so as early as possible to avoid more out-of-pocket costs later.

Despite the higher cost, book a room at the conference hotel. If you do, you will have promo packs, demo CDs, and your instrument nearby. You also can easily “freshen up,” take a quick power nap, and/or grab a snack or shower. Save money by finding a roommate, NOT by staying several blocks away. Also, FA gatherings take place in the winter. With a room in the conference hotel, you won't have to drag around an umbrella and a heavy coat.

Book your conference registration early to take advantage of any discounted rates. *As already mentioned, early registration also gets your name on the FA's list of pre-registrants so venues can find you.*

As soon as and where possible, book a table or booth at the conference. Consider booking a whole booth with 1 or 2 other artists, as it is certain that every presenter will happen into that exhibition hall at least once during the conference. Also, going in with



“Repetition helps us learn. The more times a prospect sees your name and face, the more likely they will be to remember you.”



other artists on a booth means you can be there in shifts.

Update your business cards:

When preparing your business cards, quarter-page flyers, promotional materials, and even demo CDs, have a consistent theme, color, and appearance. As part of the “live” presentation of this paper, you would be reminded of 3 things to always keep in mind as your objective from a marketing standpoint: Your Name, Your Face, and Your Talent.

When you design your business cards, here are some things to remember: Is your name clearly seen and not covered by artwork; Is all your contact information included on the card – your email address, your phone number, your website; Is there a small headshot of you? Leave a little bit of “white space” on the front of your card to write notes on. NEVER use laminated cards – venues like to take notes on the backs of business cards just like you should. One clever trick is to print small labels that fit on the back of your card to list your showcase times and locations.

Begin target attendee acquisition. To get the right people to your showcases, start by copying and pasting the list of pre-registrants on the conference website into a document, then delete the names of the artists to identify the venue people who will attend. Now further edit this list. Narrow the focus of your marketing. Start with geography. This part is easy. Strike off any venue operators in places where you don’t plan to tour. Then group/delete venues based on the genre of music that they host.

Develop a plan. This part is a little harder, but with the prevalence of websites today, it’s not that difficult to do your research. Identify the venues that host the particular kind of music you play. When you visit the venue’s websites determine:

- what kind of music they present;
- what nights they operate;
- whether or not they have openers;
- if all or part of the money goes to charity; and
- who has played or will play the venue, especially artists who perform the kind of music you do.

“Depending on the size of the conference, don’t include more than 10-15 target venues in your PLAN for your best success.”

For example, if you are male and do blues almost exclusively, and the venue hosts only female singer/songwriters, strike that venue from your list. A quick scan of the venue’s upcoming shows should answer that question. When you find venues you want to contact at the conference, the ones who host your particular brand of music, jot down as much info as you can on individual note cards and have each handy for review *before* you introduce yourself to the operator. Showing that you know a bit about a venue will do much to ingratiate you to their operator.

If a venue doesn’t have a website, do some research on sites such as Musi-Cal to see who that venue has been hosting. Also, Google the venue or operator. Often you will find an

article about a concert that has taken place there. Every additional bit of info you can collect about a potential venue is pure gold when it comes to introducing yourself.

When you do introduce yourself and inevitably have to address the question, “What’s your music like?” you can answer, “Well, my style is a lot like _____ who has played your venue.” Knowledge of your target venue can be disarming and flattering. At some point, you should even consider asking artists you know to recommend you to the venue – that would be high-end pre-conference marketing!

Send a pre-conference mailer. Get venue addresses from their websites or the FA directory (one advantage of membership). At a minimum, prepare a postcard flyer that tells a little about you, has a few of the best quotes about you, and **INCLUDES AN IDENTIFIABLE, RECENT PHOTOGRAPH OF YOU.** Don't use an artsy or a glamour photo. This photo should be the one that is on your flyers, your handouts, and your business cards. **Imprint your image on their minds and you will be there forever.**

“While more time-consuming, mailers are a highly rewarding activity that can make a favorable impression.”

***Mailer tip:** Design a ¼ page handout that has your photo, website, and contact information on the front, and a plain back. Print 500 sheets (cutting gives you a supply of 2,000). Then use a software program to print stick-on labels for the backs that have your showcase times. Each day, you can paste on as many as you need without wasting an entire printing on one event. And, you can also use these for your gigs by sticking a list of your upcoming shows on the back each time you play.*

Mailers should be sent one full month before the conference so they don’t land at the bottom of the venue operator’s bag with 30 others at the end of the conference.

The following is of utmost importance about your invitation to the venue:

- In longhand, write a personal note, mentioning that you will be at the conference, that you would like to meet them, and that you have a promo pack you can send them if they have further interest.
- Personalize the note by using the actual name of the venue contact person, “Dear _____,”

For your quotes, choose ones that are either unique or that originate from well-known sources. Avoid overused phrases such as “stellar guitar work.” Also, avoid quotes that compare you to someone well-known or to a combination of 2 different artists. Quotes from well-known venues, publications, or artists are the best. A quote from *Sing Out!* or Willie Nelson, or the *New York Times* will have more weight than one from the *Duddleburg Examiner*. However, the *DE* is certainly better than nothing.

Consider burning a demo CD to include with your pre-conference flyer. If you play with and without a band, possibly consider doing 4 songs with just you and your instrument, followed by the same 4 songs with your band. Live recordings are the most optimal for the venue operator to hear. It is not necessary to mail your retail CDs to venue prospects. A CD-R will do. Venues will notice the postcard, but they are more likely to pop in the CD-R and give it a quick listen to see if they want to attend your showcase at the conference. Your CD-R and jewel case should have a photo of you, your contact information, and your website address.

Keep good records of ALL your contacts. Use note cards to record what you have sent and said to each venue. These notes will remind you of “who has what” so you can ask them if they had a chance to listen to your CD-R before they arrived.

“Depending on the size of the conference, don’t include more than 10 target venues in your PLAN for your best success.”

Finalize your target acquisition plan.

Since you now know who you want to contact, figure out where those attendees will be. A house concert host will probably attend the House Concert Peer Group Meeting on the schedule, so plan to be there and meet that person. Get your index cards in order so when you go off to that meeting and meet the target, you will

be able to say something about their venue. Make a note at the bottom of the card to get “closure” with a request such as, “I would really like you to hear my showcase,” or “Can I give you one of my promo packs.” Better yet, if you know artists who have played the venue you are targeting, ask for an introduction!

Better to have modest success and closure with a few venues rather than a diluted effort. Ten targets are manageable in a crowd of 2,000 people. With a plan and a limited number of targets, you will be successful. For your “Top 10-15 Targets,” review the data on their cards repeatedly until you know everything about them and their venues by heart.

Conference Activities

ONE

As soon as you’re registered, put your badge in a place where everyone can see it. If it pins on, place it on your right side where a shirt pocket is or would be, so someone can see it when you shake hands. If the badge is on a lanyard and you are short, tie a knot in the cord or adjust the strap so the badge hangs mid-sternum, where it can be read easily. **NEVER** cover your name tag with business cards, drink coupons, or other materials. Your prospects may be looking for you – make it easy for them!!! **Resist the urge to pin your badge on your pants pocket, tie it around your waist, or place it in another odd location where no one can read it.**

TWO

In your registration packet will be a finalized list of those attending the conference. Once you check in, immediately go to your room or a quiet place and **scan that list for any additions to your target marketing list**. Make notes of any new targets and add them to your list.

THREE

Keep your target venue notes and promo materials with you at all times. When you are ready to leave your room, make a mental inventory of your marketing items. Business cards, check. Demo CDs, check. Quarter-page showcase flyers, check. Venue notes, check. Pen, check. You never know who you will meet in an elevator or in the dining room. Place a few of your business cards in your badge holder so you can grab one quickly and avoid fumbling through your bag to find a card. Reminder No. 2: **NEVER** cover your name tag with your business cards!! “Your Name, Your Face, and Your Talent.”

FOUR

Always have a pen handy. When you exchange cards, jot down notes on the back of the business cards you receive. These notes will be invaluable memory aids later. You **THINK** you will remember everyone you meet, but if you don’t write and take notes, you will end up with a stack of business cards after the conference with no idea why they are important.

Attend the Receptions for DJs:

At the National and Regional FA conferences, there are receptions for you to meet the DJs in attendance. This event is like a “speed dating” affair where you may have only a minute or so to give your “one-minute pitch” to each DJ there. In addition to your business cards and your quarter-page flyers, you will need some of your demo CDs in JEWEL cases with YOUR NAME, YOUR FACE, and ALL YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION on them.

Make sure your name and your CD title are clearly legible on the spine of the jewel case. DJs many times take a stack of CDs to the local PBS station where they broadcast, and they need to be able to easily read YOUR NAME on the side of the case in a stack of other CDs. Reminder: Ask the DJ if s/he would prefer that you mailed the CD. That way, you can include your one-sheet promo, your photo, and your contact information in the mailing.

This is repeated elsewhere in this paper, but make sure your demo CDs have track data, length of songs, and either the lyrics or a link to where the DJ can see them. Again, if you have ANY off-color words on any of the tracks, be sure to note that on the CD. Finally, have a one-sheet flyer made up that summarizes what you do and repeats all your contact information. This one-sheet is where you can “toot your horn,” include quotes, and mention where you have played and the honors you have won.

Maximize your booth presence:

Your greatest investment in time and energy (other than getting up for breakfast and the morning peer group meetings) should be at your table or booth in the exhibit hall. Every moment you are not showcasing, be at your booth. Get over your shyness while at your booth. Pull back your shoulders, look people in the eye, be proud of what you do, and introduce yourself to perfect strangers. This is the whole idea.

Consider the importance of the following tips.

- If you have a banner, place it on the back wall of the booth or on front of the table.
- If you have a table, use a half-height display to raise your photo and name closer to eye level. Use the SAME photo that was on your pre-conference flyers, business cards, demo CDs, and other promotional material.
- On the front table of your booth or table top, **have 2 CD players for visitors to listen to your music**, just in case one is in use. Have plenty of batteries, if you don't have electrical outlets.
- **Display photos of yourself on stage and in front of “intimate” audiences**, such as at house concerts and children's presentations, so venues can see that you perform for a variety of audiences.
- **Display 2 or 3 of your promo packs** with “For Booth Use Only” written on them in red felt tip. You will still lose a few of these kits if you step away from your booth, so have back-up copies ready to replace them. Keep promo packs and demo CDs out of sight but handy, so you can give them to viable prospects.
- **Give crystal CD cases to DJs.** As mentioned above, they need to find your CD in a stack/file and they can't do that with “organic” type paper cases. You can give paper CD cases to other people.
- **Never sit unless the hall is empty.** Wear comfortable shoes and be prepared to stand up, since it is hard to walk past someone standing up.
- A

“Make the extra effort to make the best impression.”

people who approach your booth who they represent. If they say they are from a “folklore society” or similar folk group, ask them if they are in charge of talent booking. If they aren’t, be cordial, but don’t offer up your demo CD or press kit.

- **Look at people as they approach and be prepared to greet them.**
- If the individual is on your target marketing list, use clear language – language that “closes.” Instead of saying, “I’m playing a showcase at midnight tonight,” try, **“I’m playing a showcase at midnight tonight and I hope you can find the time to come hear me.”**
- If a venue expresses enough interest to revisit your booth after hearing you, or to approach you in the hall after a showcase, be sure to **use “closure” language** again. **Not:** “It would really be nice to play your venue sometime.” The venue person will likely agree with you – “Yes, it would be nice.” **Instead:** “I would really like to play your venue. How would I go about getting your consideration?” Be direct, professional, and avoid the use of vague time frames such as “someday.”
- The first rule of marketing is “don’t initiate a discussion by talking about yourself or what you are selling.” Get people to talk about themselves and their venues.
- **Ask questions that do NOT require a yes or no answer.** Good questions include: “What type of music are you looking for?” “How does one apply to be considered for your venue?” “What is the process?”
- **Listen!** The ratio of books in the US on “Speech” and “Public Speaking” to books on “The Art of Listening” is over 100 to 1. We have 1 mouth and 2 ears. That should indicate that we were born to listen at least twice as much as we talk.
- Be upbeat! Be interesting! **Outside your room, never be negative about anything.** The food, the hotel, NOTHING! You never know who is listening!
- Have a snack on your table. **Individually wrapped hard candy or something in a wrapper is perfect.** Here is an opportunity for you to be creative in attracting people to your booth. Hershey Kisses are tempting to everyone and are reasonably priced. Avoid nuts, fruit slices, or anything not wrapped, which can spread germs from people’s hands.
- **NEVER bring reading material that totally absorbs your attention.** I have seen artists so engrossed in the latest copy of a magazine that they never look up.
- Don’t chat with others who have booths when there are guests in the area – being locked in conversation may cost both of you the opportunity to interact with visitors.
- **When you visit with someone, give them your full attention, regardless of who walks by.** Everyone you meet deserves courtesy and respect, both for the obvious reason (treat everyone as you would like to be treated) and for the mercenary one (you never know who that person is going to turn out to be). You don’t want to be the person that is always on the lookout for someone more important or influential to talk to – dropping a conversation when another person enters their field of vision.
- **While in the exhibit hall, don’t block access to anyone’s table.** You can have conversations without getting in someone else’s way.

- **Ask for a card from every person to whom you give your promo pack.** Have a pen handy at all times and as soon as they walk away, jot some notes on the back of their business card about the person (height, hair color/length, glasses, etc.) so you can recall them later. These cards will eventually become part of your post-conference activities (see below).
- **Ask before taking anything from an exhibitor's table** unless "free, take one" is readily apparent. If you take something from a vendor or other artist, you should feel obligated to hear their spiel.

"Don't get fooled into giving your CD or promo pack to someone that isn't your target market."

- Finally, **leave the exhibit hall promptly at closing time** so the hall can be cleaned and secured until the next session. Do NOT leave anything of value, such as your computer, in the hall overnight.

A Special Note – Conserve your CDs:

Whether at your booth table or when you are showcasing, don't give out your commercially produced CDs! Use CD-Rs. Provide the venues with live recordings if possible, songs in both a solo and band context if applicable, packaged in jewel cases with your photo on the front, and all contact information on both the case and the disc. **REMEMBER:** Be sure to test all the CD-Rs you plan to give out, since sometimes home duplication can be faulty.

Most venue people attending a conference are professional and only take CDs from artists in whom they have a genuine interest. Others, however, may be from a local folk club, folklore society, and/or have absolutely nothing to do with booking for the venue they represent. These bloodsuckers go from table to table in the exhibit hall or from showcase to showcase collecting free CDs for their personal use. It is very unprofessional, but they think they deserve it for their "support" of folk music. If they aren't the booking person, ask who is and tell them you will send a promo pack to that person when you get home.

ANOTHER Special Note – Conserve your health:

The tips on staying healthy that have been offered up to augment this paper grew far beyond what could be included in the basic document and have been collected into Appendix B – "Tips on how to keep from getting sick while being in a hotel Petri dish with over 1,000 other individuals." In addition, Appendix C – "How to keep your VOICE healthy" by vocal coach Brenda Freed has been added for your reading enjoyment. My thanks to the EMTs, the Public Health Nurses, the Doctors, and to Ms. Freed for offering up their suggestions.

Make your showcases shine:

Play your heart out at every showcase, even if there is only one person in the room. That may be the person who books a major festival. If you let the number of people in the room get you down, you may give a lackluster performance in front of a top prospect you have identified.

Play your best material. Don't experiment with something new and untried – do that at an open mic back home. You are paying a LOT of money to attend the conference and showcase your talent – DON'T waste it!!

Don't play all "In The Round" showcases. While ITR showcases may cut your costs, many venues and media attendees avoid ITRs completely because their time is valuable. They may want to hear you, but have to listen to 2 other performers to get to hear 1 song from you in an ITR.

Time your showcases well. Always end on time or slightly early. Don't force the host to shut you down. Don't infringe on the next artist's time with your inability to control your set. If the artist playing ahead of you appears to be going over his/her time, stand in an obvious place at the back of the room holding your guitar, etc. If you catch his/her eye, point to your watch. Everyone knows that signal!

Don't put out a pile of CDs. Instead, **put out a basket for business cards or a clipboard** (and pen) for an interested venue to sign. Mention the basket or clipboard frequently throughout your set as people come and go. If the person is interested in getting one of your CDs, this allows you to screen who gets them and reduces the pile the venue/DJ has to fly home with. Also, when you mail your CD to the prospect, you can include a personal note with your promo materials (NAME and FACE), thus keeping everything about you in the same envelope.

Get fellow artists to attend your showcases and you attend theirs. It fills the room, you will play better with an audience, and there is a major principle of marketing to remember: No one stops at a restaurant that isn't crowded. Yogi Berra said it best: "No one goes there anymore. It's too crowded." If there are a few people listening to you, others will stop in – it is human nature.

Don't be offended if people come and go during your performance. FA showcases are the one time that it is acceptable to leave between songs, or even during songs. Most venue representatives are trying to hear as many new artists as they can and, to do so, may have to listen to more than one artist each half hour. If they were there to have a good time, they would just sit in one of the major showcases rooms all night. The fact that they came and listened at all should be considered a compliment to you.

Do not play the same songs at each showcase. Demonstrate your variety of talent by having alternate sets of music for those who might attend more than one of your showcases. Venues and DJs that are screening you may drop in for only 1 or 2 songs more than once. Sometimes they don't even stay for an entire song. Don't be discouraged. If they pop in and

pop out of your showcases, that is very likely a good sign that they are sampling your material. They are seeing if you have more material than the prior songs they heard.

Don't play your longest songs! Your prospects are looking for variety to keep their audiences' attention. This is NOT the time for the 9-minute funeral dirge.

Have a tent-type sign with your NAME and visible from the front of the room.

Place it in front of you, ESPECIALLY when in a round...too many times the host of the room doesn't identify the artists after the first intro. Feel free to say your name each time you play a song in a round, "For those who just came in...."

At the conclusion of your set, immediately collect your instrument, tuner, cables, etc. and clear the way for the next artist. If there is a Green Room, quickly leave your equipment there and step into the hallway to meet people who may want to visit with you.

Do not just go to the Green Room and lose this opportunity to visit with the venues that have expressed interest in you. When the venue and you do meet in the hallway following a set, step a few feet away from the doorway to allow others to enter and leave. Be sure your conversations don't interfere with the next artist's showcase. Once the opportunity to meet and greet has passed, slip back into the Green Room to retrieve equipment without interrupting the next performer.

Finally, **don't ever play off-color, political, controversial, or offensive material in any of your showcases!** Wait until you know your audience before you pull out your blue

"Don't be rude and talk during seminars or other artists' showcases."

material. If you find this suggestion to censor your material offensive, just remember that I can't sell retirement plans to Kamikaze pilots either.

Put your best foot forward:

Always introduce yourself to prospective venues, no matter if you have met the person before and you are sure they know your name. Name tags can be difficult to read without the embarrassing glance – we all get tired and the courtesy of saying your name as a reminder is greatly appreciated.

Always be "on" – never let your guard down outside your room. Whether it is in the elevator, standing in line to eat, or in a seminar, act professionally.

Never gossip AND always be courteous.

Don't interrupt conversations between an artist and a venue.

Don't pick up CDs in showcase rooms that are intended for presenters and DJs.

Look for opportunities to meet the venue contacts on your target list, and expect to meet people at all times or when you least expect it. The old guy in the elevator may just be responsible for booking the venues you want to play.

Don't be loud or boisterous in the hallways outside someone else's showcase room. If you don't respect the music of others, you may offend a possible venue contact.

If you are a smoker, think about where you smoke. If you smoke in a stairwell that is the only route between floors, and you make the venues and other artists inhale your smoke, you are probably not going to make many friends. If you smoke upwind from an outdoor gathering, you will likely offend every venue and DJ at the conference!

At the sponsored luncheons, don't sit with friends. You and your friends/band members should spread out around the room and sit at random tables. It is critical to meet new people. So, jump right in amongst perfect strangers. One of them might be the perfect venue for you!

After midnight on the last night of a conference, walk around and pick up good examples of promo material that you have seen on the tables and tack boards. These examples will help you improve your material for the next conference (and you also are reducing the conference waste stream).

Work on your professional development:

Every day at music conferences there are free professional development sessions starting at 9:00 a.m. Many are for artists (insurance, travel, CD production, financing, food on the road), but others are for venue types – how to host concerts, how to run a non-profit, etc. You may think those topics are of no interest to you, but GUESS WHAT? EVERYONE YOU WANT TO SELL YOUR MUSIC TO IS IN THOSE MEETINGS! So, get your butt out of bed and to those meetings, meet people, hand out demos, and work!

By attending peer group meetings, you learn what the venues' problems are. Their problems may surprise and enlighten you on your approach to getting booked. New venues sometimes express how difficult it is to find artists – at which point you will want to scream, "Here I am. Take me!"

Many artists end up in music jams that traditionally go on until the hotel restaurant opens for breakfast. These people are making great friendships and having a great time – BUT THEY AIN'T GETTING BOOKED. Go to bed and be ready to get up early to capitalize on the breakfasts, and morning sponsored coffees and sessions!

Your poster and flyer placements:

The use of posters and flyers has ebbed and flowed at music conferences based on the ecological mood of the sponsors. Although there is a strong desire to become paperless, the use of posters and signs to be

“Take good notes for future reference and planning.”

signs
seems

creeping back into the National and Regional FA conferences. Due to the variability of the conference preference, the suggestions for poster and flyer placement are in Appendix D, so that you may refer to them if they are applicable.

Plan for future conferences:

While at the conference, try to visit every showcase room. Observe how each is managed. Do they have their act together? Are they rigorously on time? Is the host professional and efficient at moving artists in and out of their showcase room, or do they act like they are running a slumber party for their friends? Does the host put out name signs in front of each artist, so those entering the room can know who is playing (particularly for rounds)?

Is the room host showcasing music similar to yours? Are they well attended? What is the level of talent? Would you want to be associated with the artists the host is showcasing?

Does the host have sufficient chairs? Is the room arranged like a concert (BAD) or like a “bobsled,” where venues can sneak in and slip out without crawling over people or getting trapped in a corner? Do they have food, water, etc. for the guests?

Does the room have sufficient lighting or is it lit like a bordello? Many venues try to take non-flash photos of each artist to help them remember, and some of the dark rooms I have been in at FA gatherings were so dark that even note-taking was impossible.

Does the room have solo performances or ITR type presentations? Many showcase hosts want to be efficient and give as many artists a chance to play as possible.

Unfortunately, most venues despise rounds. Why? Efficiency for them. An ITR may have 2 artists that the venue dearly loves and regularly books, but that is not why the venue is there. It is there to hear the new artist they haven’t heard before, NOT to be entertained.

Depending on when the guest arrives at the ITR, the venue may have to wait through 2 songs by the artists s/he knows and that is 10 minutes of precious time they just don’t have. What is the upside to an ITR? Well, if you are the unknown artist, being sandwiched

between 1 or 2 crowd favorites can bring in people who would probably never stop in to see you as a solo performer. So, do both solo and ITRs in moderation. Don't just do all ITRs.

Does the room or host serve alcohol? If they do, try to avoid them like the plague. These rooms become congregating places for loud-mouthed amateur drinkers who take up space and prevent the venues from getting in or hearing you perform.

Note the times the host of the showcase room uses in the schedule. If they book odd times like 11:36 p.m. or 12:11 p.m., AVOID them. The host may think they are being smart by hosting at a time that will give them a "unique" time slot on the program, but they are absolutely wrong. Venues wanting to hear artists look at the major time blocks, 11:30 p.m., 11:45 p.m., 12:00 p.m., etc. and mark their choices out of the 30-50 rooms that are available. The "cutesy" time slot of 11:36 p.m. is usually buried on the next page and doesn't get noticed until after it is already over.

For the showcase rooms you determine you want to play, find out who the host is and introduce yourself. Ask how to be considered for next year, what the application schedule is, and when you can send a demo CD for consideration. It is totally appropriate to ask about costs, because the refreshments supplied and room rates vary from year to year.

Post-Conference Activities

When you get home, FOLLOW-UP, or a great deal of your effort will be wasted and your momentum will be lost. **The concept of "closure" is a key part of target marketing.** As a venue person, I probably get 50 pieces of pre-conference mail. After a National conference, I will likely only receive 1 and never more than 2 notes thanking me for stopping by a booth or attending a showcase, or asking if there is potential to play my venues. Without follow-up action to "close" the deal or the relationship, your efforts may be for naught.

Send a note to all the venue people you meet, reminding them who you are and asking if they would care for a more detailed promo pack. Good notes on the back of their business cards (or the target cards you prepared about them) will assist you in personalizing and tailoring your follow-up note to the venue. These notes should ALWAYS include a recognizable photo of you, your web presence, and your contact information.

Don't assume the world will beat a path to your door. If you don't contact the venue and **express your interest**, that person may interpret your lack of follow-up as a lack of interest, or simply assume you aren't planning to be in their area in the near future. Never, EVER, leave your level of interest open to assumption!! Your target will assume that someone else wants the work more than you do!

If you don't get a reply, wait about 1 month and drop another note or email. In it, ask if they would mind if you called them in the near future to discuss their requirements, and to see if your work is compatible with their venue.

Look at your target venue's website. Are they booked when you will be in the area? If they appear to have an open date, you should mention that you noticed they do

“If you build the relationship, the gigs will follow.”

and ask if they have a “tentative” artist they are in contact with. If not, express your interest in playing on that date. I don't know how many times artists contact me about dates that are clearly shown as booked on my website. If they can't look that up, they shouldn't be touring!! If a venue is booked when you tour their area and you are able to get other places to play, invite your target host to attend your other show(s) as your guest.

If they fail to reply to your second note, don't despair. Wait about 6 months and drop them another note. The “third time's a charm” rule works when you are making contacts. **Keep a positive mental attitude** and assume that they have simply been too busy to reply. This is more than likely the case!

Even after your third attempt, still **DON'T WRITE OFF THE NON-RESPONDERS!!** Keep all your notes and look for these individuals at the next festival or conference meeting. When you again meet them, be as genuinely nice to them as you were the first time you met. Your openness will be welcomed. Always remember, your primary objective is to build relationships. Your secondary objective is to book gigs.

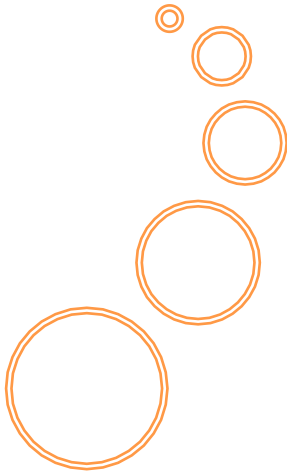
Finally, **never assume that if a venue doesn't book you that they don't like you or your music.** A few years ago, I mentioned to Tim Mason who managed Club Passim that half my music collection was Reggae, but I couldn't get 5 people out of my 700 person mailing list to come to a Reggae show. He replied, “If I booked what I like, we would have been bankrupt 25 years ago.”

A rut is a grave with both ends kicked out of it, and many venues get in a rut of providing what their audience will come to hear or the same tried and true artists every year. So, please recognize that fact and **never get discouraged.** You are an artist, you are proud of what you do, and success will be yours if you put effort into your professional development and marketing.

Acknowledgements

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This is a living document, designed to make the path gentler for those who follow. Please contribute additional ideas, corrections, or suggestions to Paul@BarkerHouseConcerts.com or to Paul Barker, P.E, 1436 Circle Ridge Drive, Austin, TX 78746.



APPENDIX A

Tips for Presenters at Conferences

1. As soon as the formal showcases are announced, start your homework. Print out the list and begin to search the web for live performances of the artists. If you know of other venues who are attending the conference, see if you can get them to recommend artists for you to hear. It is incredibly valuable to me to arrive at a FA gathering with 20-30 recommendations from my peers.
2. **Arrive early.** This allows you to have time to look over the final attendance list, meet with other presenters, organize your paperwork, go through the schedule, and attempt to see a pattern to the scurrying around you will do for the next few days. At the National and Regional FA conferences, I join a number of venue friends on the night of the bag-stuffing party for a bite to eat and a whole lot of, “You gotta hear....” These tips are invaluable.
3. **Develop a recordkeeping system** (see Appendix A-1). If you don’t, after 30 or 40 artists you’ll be saying to yourself, “Was she the guy with the beard?” As much as we would like to think we will remember, we don’t. You don’t want to end up booking someone that wasn’t who you had in mind. Following my first FA gathering, my notes were such a mess (“G,” “NVG,” “BPS” (basic protest singer)), etc. that I developed a recordkeeping system that is summarized in the attachments. PLEASE feel free to plagiarize it and make it your own. My system includes Instrument Use, Use of Imagery, Use of Rhyme, Vocal Range, Song Variety, Universality of the Song, Audience Rapport, Appearance, and an Overall Rating. It also has the names of the songs performed and a physical description of the artist that helps me attach the photos I take of each artist.
4. **Take photos of the artists** – an inexpensive investment that will help jog your memory. You can also pick up flyers for artists that you want to remember and hopefully, they will have read this paper and they will have a readily recognizable photo of themselves (and contact info) on it.
5. **Be upfront with the artists you meet** – let them know how many shows you host each year, how receptive you are to new blood in your line-up, how far out you book, what kind of music you are looking for, etc. This will eliminate many unnecessary emails and/or uncomfortable non-responses down the line.
6. **Develop a plan** (see Appendix A-2). Finding artists on the multi-page showcase schedule on the fly can be intimidating. Prepare a sheet that has time down the left and rooms/artists across the top. With it, you can visualize how you want to move from room to room. My simple chart shows time, room number, and artist that allows you to lay out the multiple artists per showcase time, so you can figure out if it’s better to see one artist on “this” floor or waste 10 minutes trying to get up 3 floors to hear someone else. Frequently, the elevators are impossible to use, so be prepared to do something else on the floor you’re on rather than waste 10 or more minutes waiting for an elevator.
7. **Develop a circle of venue friends** – I have yet to find a venue host like myself at an FA gathering that wasn’t ready to offer an opinion on anything. Develop this circle of friends and before the next conference, ask each of them to “cough up” their recommended “to hear” artists from the pre-registration list. I participate in a group like this and by the time I arrive, I have a list of at least 20 artists who are recommended by my peers and I would very likely never have stumbled on by myself.

8. **Identify the artists you want to hear** – when you identify artists you want to hear on the showcase schedule, mark each of their showcases with “1/3” or 1 of 3, for example. This will be most helpful when you have conflicts between showcases you want to hear. If one artist is playing his/her 3rd of 3 and someone else is playing their 3rd of 7, you can plan to catch the second artist at another time.
9. **Manage your health and your sleep.** You can’t do it all. You simply can’t hear everyone you need or want to hear. In fact, out of the 1,200 artists attending the FAI gathering, you will likely not be able to hear more than 40-60. If you allow yourself to be tired, you will be overly critical of what you hear. I tell people, if you give me a \$100 bill after 2:00 a.m. I will whine and say, “Now where the hell am I going to break this?” You owe it to the artists who are playing their hearts out to be fresh and attentive.
10. **Attend seminars** – finally, attend the peer group meetings and find out what problems your peers have faced in their area – zoning, code enforcement, sales tax, contracts, booking, etc. Everyone at these meetings is anxious to share their experience and knowledge. NONE of us is competing with one another – we all want others to succeed. Now, that’s a strange business model.
11. **Make sure you visit the exhibit hall** to follow up with artists you wish to communicate with regarding your venue. You should also make a point of introducing yourself to the booking agents who are there. It’s always nice to be able to put a face with the voice on the phone.
12. After a showcase, don’t rush the stage/artist and pin them there when they should be clearing the stage for the next showcase. Ask the artist if you can step into the hallway (and away from the door) to visit.

APPENDIX A-1

SINGER/SONGWRITER PROFILE																
BARKER HOUSE CONCERTS																
Artist: _____						Date: ____/____/____			Location: _____							
Instrument Use				Use Of Imagery				Use Of Rhyme				Vocal Range				
Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Simple / Awkward	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Nashville / Strained	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Limited	Good	Very Good	Excellent	
Universality Of The Song				Song Variety			Audience Rapport			Appearance		Overall Rating				
Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Limited	Good	Excellent	Too Much Talk & T.F.M.T.	Good	Professional	Too Casual	Professional	Good / Fair / NVG	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding	
Guitar Style: _____ Picker _____ Strummer						Artist's Hometown _____			PHOTO Physical Description: (For Photo Identification)							
Comments: _____ _____ _____ _____																
___ Photo Ordered			___ Profile in Data Base			___ Profile Scanned										
Website: _____																
Email: _____																
Phones: W: _____ C: _____																
Songs																
(1)																
(2)																
(3)																
(4)																
(5)																

APPENDIX A-2

[illegible]

APPENDIX A-2

FOLK ALLIANCE SHOWCASE PLANNING FORM									
Showcase Duration, Room Number, and Artists									
TIME		DUR.	Room/Artist	DUR.	Room/Artist	DUR.	Room/Artist	DUR.	Room/Artist
	Room:								
	Artist:								
	Room:								
	Artist:								
	Room:								
	Artist:								
	Room:								
	Artist:								
	Room:								
	Artist:								

APPENDIX B

Tips to Conserve Your Energy and Health at Conferences

The following simple suggestions are offered to help you maintain your health while getting by on too little sleep and working at energy levels you never knew were possible. During these times, your body is vulnerable to ills that you might normally shrug off when you are rested, fit, and well-fed.

1. Go to bed each night by 2:00 a.m. (alone) and get up at 8:30 a.m.
2. Manage your sleep as you'd manage anything else. Take naps when you can. A short nap in the middle of the afternoon can recharge your batteries for the long evening ahead. Lie down, put a moist wash cloth over your eyes and relax. Do NOT take your clothes off or get into bed when you nap. This tells your body that you're going to bed for the night and you will be punch-drunk when you get up. Sounds crazy, but it works.
3. Some attendees recommend starting on Cold-EEZE when you arrive and keep taking it during the conference.
4. Drink plenty of water each day, especially if you're also drinking alcohol.
5. Wash your hands constantly. FA gatherings in the winter are huge incubators of flu bugs and bacteria waiting to take you down while your defenses are lowered by fatigue.
6. Have wet-wipes with you at all times. Germs can be acquired from shared microphones and that risk can be minimized by using alcohol wet wipes.
7. Use your used paper towel to turn off the faucet and open doors of restrooms when you leave. Everyone, including you, turns on a faucet with a dirty hand.
8. In your room, wash your faucet handles with soap, especially when others have visited and used the facility.
9. DON'T eat with your fingers.
10. Don't share cell phones or use a wet wipe on it before you do.
11. Wipe down the phone in the hotel before you use it.
12. Wipe down the steering wheel of the rental car before you touch it.
13. Avoid the Petri dishes of open, unwrapped snacks in some showcase rooms. Dirty fingers spread disease. You may be sure of your hands, but what about others?
14. If you have a cold and have to cough, do so where you will not infect others. If you have to cough, cough into your sleeve or use your elbow to cover your mouth. Coughing into your hand and then handling equipment or shaking hands will serve to spread illness.
15. Step out of the hotel every day for some fresh air. Hotels are notorious for cutting back on fresh air make-up during the winter.
16. Eat well. Don't skimp. You're spending a lot of money to be here, spend a little more to eat and keep your energy up.
17. Bottled water is an environmental disaster, but if you have a sensitive stomach when you travel, the bottling process homogenizes the bottled water product such that you will likely not have water-related stomach issues.
18. Avoid coffee and sugar to keep you going at night. One will keep you from getting sleep later and the other will make your blood sugar crash when you can least afford it.
19. Wash the glasses and cups in your rooms before using them. Maids are notorious for wiping out cups with dirty towels and putting the cups back on the counter. You don't see clean and dirty cups in the maid carts, do you?

20. At all meals, carefully wipe your eating utensils before using them. By the time they are placed at your table and/or wrapped in that napkin, at least 3 food handlers have touched them with ungloved hands. If you have hand sanitizer or handy wipes, this is a perfect time to use them.
21. Invest in a portable tube of hand sanitizer and handy wipes and use them all the time – discretely after every hand shake.
22. Change your shoes at least twice a day – it will dramatically improve your sense of well-being.
23. Slip off to your room and wash your face when you start to wear down. It will refresh you and get you back in the game.
24. Avoid crowded elevators. They are incubators. If anyone sharing one with you has an upper respiratory infection, you WILL be exposed.

APPENDIX C

Healthy Vocal Maintenance Techniques

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1. Most importantly, make sure you are consistently getting a proper belly breath – it will help you stay relaxed, build vocal stamina, be able to project safely, and avoid injury in general.
2. Sing with good posture whether sitting or standing – it will help stay relaxed, keep you from over-compensating and hurting your muscles, and help the air to flow freely, helping you sing on pitch consistently.
3. Like any other muscle, the voice needs warm-ups, exercise and rest – before your gig, gently sing to the radio, a CD, or do the exercises on my Effortless Singing CD. Warm up your entire range.
4. Vocal pacing – sing a little every day except if you’ve had a demanding performance schedule. In that case, rest your voice from singing or excessive talking in-between performances. Give yourself down time after long performances, but still warm up before each performance.
5. Stay moist – a drink of water takes a while for it to be absorbed and have an effect, so always drink a lot of water. It takes more air to vibrate dry vocal folds, so it’s helpful to have a lot of water in your system all the time.
6. Sing in a comfortable range most of the time. If you are singing in a style that requires continuous loud, high pitched, or forceful singing, or if you are using abusive character voices, do it from the belly breath and relax the neck and the muscle under the chin as much as possible to avoid damaging your vocal instrument.
7. Avoid diuretics and drying medications. They dry tissue in your larynx, constrict blood vessels and reduce circulation. Excessive caffeine, smoking, and alcohol also dry out the vocal folds, and alcohol affects hearing, causing people to over-sing.
8. Chronic throat clearing and chronic coughing can have negative consequences for the voice – learn air blast coughing – it can be just as effective in clearing your throat. Chronic throat clearing and chronic coughing can also be a symptom of something serious so consult a physician if they persist.
9. If you’re noticing a negative effect on your voice, you may need to change what you sing, how you sing, or how often you sing. If you rest, make changes, and still have a problem, consult a doctor. It could be something serious that needs immediate attention.
10. If you think you have damaged your voice, REST and stay moist. Breathing in steam by spending time in a hot shower or bath also helps add moisture to the vocal folds.
11. Make healthy singing techniques a habit by incorporating proper posture, belly breathing, relaxation, vocal warm-ups, exercise, and rest into your everyday life. Singing becomes effortless when you no longer have to think about techniques.
12. Singing is an activity that can out-live almost any other life activity. Take good care of your voice and it will bring you much joy, and perform effortlessly for you for the rest of your life!

APPENDIX D

Tips for Promotional Poster Production, Placement, and Management

Prepare your artwork – if the conference allows posters and handouts, prepare yours ahead of time.

Posters should:

- be no smaller than 8.5” x 11” (check conference rules!);
- have a good color photo of you in the upper two-thirds of the frame; and
- have all showcases and times in the lower one-third.

Note: Leave blank areas for room numbers, which you fill in once you get to the conference.

Though a close-up photo of you seems ideal, creativity can be useful. Ask yourself, how can my poster stand out from the other 100 plus posters that will be posted everywhere? One caveat: nude, lascivious pictures attract some and discourage others. A lot of presenters ask, “Is this an attempt to make up for a lack of musical talent?”

Poster and flyer placement – arrive at the conference early and, if the conference allows posters and flyers, get the best spots for your placement.

- Post at eye-level in the middle of the board, if the approach is straight-on.
- If in a corner position where the crowd will have to walk around, post on the side of the board as close to the traffic pattern as possible.
- To accommodate all types of wall surfaces (since you can’t know ahead of time), bring push pins, tape, and a miniature stapler. If the conference uses cork boards, always use the stapler as it’s much faster and also prevents other artists from “borrowing” 3 of your 4 push pins.
- Only post in the authorized areas. Defacing the elevators, walls, ceilings, etc. with inappropriate tape will not only result in the staff tearing down your posters, but you might end up offending some of the very venue people you’d like to impress.

Poster management – throughout the conference and several times a day, monitor your posters to be sure that someone hasn’t placed a flyer over yours or used 3 of your push pins to hang their own posters. If someone ‘accidentally’ covers your flyer, reposition their poster so it doesn’t conflict with yours. Don’t feel guilty about asserting yourself.

Remember: *The poster hung over yours may have been moved there by someone taking that person’s board space.* You repositioning it is the right thing to do – don’t assume they did it intentionally.

Keep tape, pins, and a felt tip marker with you in your fanny pack/briefcase/shoulder bag, along with all of your other promotional materials.