



HOW TO USE YOUR CHEQUE BOOK IN MUSIC IN 2010

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Here's another 500 words, alongside several other sets of 500 words, with a back-story of 'everything's changing.' One thing is for sure – it's a great time to be in the marketing conference business. There's a fortune to be made in exploiting the confusion and indecision amongst sponsors and rights holders in music. In fact, I've got a name for one. Let's call it *"It's Not Rock It's Science."* I'll book Earl's Court once I've finished this article up.

It's not rocket science, but it's not easy doing business in music in 2010. Let's start with the easy. People who buy lager, hair curlers, skin cream and soft drinks love music. No matter how many media revolutions take place – that remains the case. My 18 month old boy likes dancing to the Tweenies at 7am each day. My 92 year old grandmother could conceivably get a Susan Boyle CD for her birthday if she knew how to work her new 'gramophone.' Often it's a precursor or an accompaniment to sex. These are terrific raw ingredients that will never go away. Do people feel the same way about an advert, a piece of paper on their doormat, about football? That's rhetorical.

Trying to get an understanding of the business model of music sponsorship is like trying to get hold of a wobbling blancmange. Since the birth of MySpace and Last.fm, sponsors and rights holders have been facing each other off like kids playing bulldog in the playground. So in 2010, perhaps it's time for brands to start thinking about time rather than money to connect with audiences.

It wasn't so long ago that we all doffed our caps to Bacardi's creation of a brand funded record label. A few years on, talent needs less cash (although they'll take it) and more help. Talent is just the start. One option is to queue at MEN Arena twice a year and hope two banks of researchers let you through to Cowell, Minogue, D et al. Alternatively you can learn how to spread your talent online. The Internet should encourage meritocracy. At the moment, it's those with talent with a PC keyboard rather than a piano who are rising to the top. You need to know how to do both. Brands that provide genuine help and guidance to young talent will be welcomed. Some already are, in particular, Orange and Rockcorps and vinspired.com.

As Barclaycard, O2 and HMV have noted, people still like the idea of switching their computer off and going outside. The growth of social media will continue to have a positive impact on live music. Winners will join both strands together. Social media is encouraging people to become more social in the real world. US based research from Euro RSCG this month, states that 27% of young people feel that online social interaction was benefiting their offline social relationships. An EMR survey on digital music in '07 said that 36% of music fans were now going to more gigs. Music fans are coming together in communities online spelling bad news for music retailers, but great news for live music venues and promoters. So if it's easier for communities to come together online around music tastes, then we can expect the same in live music too. Once I get my grandmother online, she might make it up to Exeter to see Susan Boyle.

Brands can still connect with their audiences by offering new things, unique things, exclusive things, 'money can't buy' things, and by generally being helpful. Everything changes in the music industry, but music itself doesn't change. Music fans haven't changed their personalities – they just hang out in different places.

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