

## **Arts Audiences**

New Media Mentoring Scheme  
Mentoring Report

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Date: 29/7/2010

This report was written specifically for publication on the Arts Audiences website, and for subsequent discussion on the Arts Ireland group on LinkedIn. If you are reading this in PDF from, you may like to visit [www.artsaudiences.ie](http://www.artsaudiences.ie), where you will be able to click through links which you'll find throughout the document.

## **Arts Audiences Report**

### **Our Mentoring Requirement**

RTE Publishing mentored Music Network on the development of an online communications plan for Ireland's first national music day, love:live music, that took place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April. We planned to use social networking and online platforms for the first time to generate viral marketing between the events participants and to a wider audience. As resources for the event were limited, online communications were central to the promotional strategy, working in tandem with in kind advertising and a PR Strategy.

### **What we did**

We started out by developing an online communications plan that aimed to generate general awareness of the event, to encourage people to find out what's on in their area (thereby increasing the number of people attending the events) and to encourage people to get involved by registering their own event (thereby increasing the number of events taking place)

The elements of the online communications plan included:

#### Website Development

An event specific website ([www.lovelivemusic.ie](http://www.lovelivemusic.ie)) was developed by Pixel Design to which all offline and online activity directed people. Search engine optimisation functions were built into the event site so that it was easily found when searched for. The website included features such as RSS feeds, a blog, share buttons, google maps for events, enewsletter subscription, a featured event as well as links to Facebook, Twitter, MySpace.

#### Email Broadcasting

An email broadcasting account was set up in order to issue e newsletters to our contacts, again directing people to the event site.

#### Social Media Optimisation

The aim of using social media sites was to direct visitors to [lovelivemusic.ie](http://lovelivemusic.ie) to either find out about an event in their area or to register an event of their own. Music Network set up accounts on Facebook, Twitter and MySpace. In order to generate friends/fans/followers to these platforms, Music Network invited all previous touring artists, all current artists on the Music Network roster, and all recipients of Music Network awards (and went from having no social media activity to having 194 followers on Twitter, 491 fans on Facebook and 344 friends on MySpace).

Finally, we targeted bloggers with event information via digital press releases.

## **What worked, what didn't**

RTE Publishing's advice on our online communications, establishing and maintaining social networking and online platforms was of great value to the project, as we had no experience in this area. For me, the main benefit of the mentoring was being able to run the plans by people who have the expertise, and be assured by them that we were on the right track. Once we had set up accounts on the various platforms, they assured us that our numbers of fans/followers/friends were healthy.

The mentoring was also of great value in terms of troubleshooting, as and when problems emerged. One issue that arose for me early on was how to effectively brand the event without losing the association with Music Network. The mentors suggested using a solution based on how RTE uses the corporate brand over a number of activity areas. They also stressed the importance from the outset of getting all the participants using the branding too by sending them branding guidelines.

The mentors had lots of suggestions and ideas, (not all of which we used this time around) which were really helpful in mapping out how far we could take the online communications. For us, all of their suggestions that we implemented worked, and the only downside was that we couldn't implement them all this time around, or we underestimated the time that it would take realise those ideas. For example, they stressed at an early stage to secure broadcasting and streaming rights from all participants so that we can use the content on online platforms, which we did. They also suggested engaging stringers to ensure that we could have content post events for the social media platforms. We managed to engage some stringers, but not enough, and missed the boat on getting the content, which is now lost to us. But, that was a huge learning for us.

We didn't maximise the potential of You Tube to harness content from partner organisations. As mentioned above, next year we will engage much more stringers and use this content post event.

## **Overall conclusions**

Overall, the event was a success, due in no small part to the online communications plan and the mentoring received. As resources for the event were limited, we could not have achieved the reach that we did, without it.

Many of the ideas that were suggested by the mentors but not activated were ones that we simply didn't have the people power to put in place. A huge learning from this project has been that while social media is free to use, it needs to be resourced with people and time in order to make the best use of it. Facebook and Twitter are constantly hungry and need to be fed content!

The mentoring was at a strategic level, but closer to the event, I realised that we would have benefited from some of the very basic skills in using the social media platforms. However, at that point, the event was gaining momentum and there was not the time to seek this resource, even though it could have been made available to us.