

# **PLAYING THE PUBLICITY GAME**

Music Promotion to the Finnish Media

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## **ABSTRACT**

Music promotion is all about getting the word out about an artist and respectively getting a good song heard. In its essence it is no different from promotion in general, but the specialty lies in that music is connected to emotions, thus it is heavily dependent on individual tastes. With declining promotion budgets, especially at smaller independent record labels, artists depend more and more on publicity as a form of ‘free’ promotion. The current oversupply of music has resulted in fierce competition for media attention and consequently publicity can often be very hard to obtain.

This thesis aimed to take a closer look at the media’s role in music promotion with the focus on the concept of publicity, determine the stimuli for media’s interest in an artist and define directions for a mutually beneficial cooperation between music companies and key media.

The study focused on the Finnish market and firstly analyzed the two main industries concerned, music and media. It built on the theoretical concept of the marketing mix, which needs to be applied to the mass media in order to obtain the publicity that forms a vital part of the promotion mix that is targeted at the general public. The empirical research incorporated both qualitative and quantitative elements in the form of interviews with key industry professionals and a media survey.

The findings of the research showed that the views of industry professionals matched by and large and it was agreed that there is room for improvement. The factors of biggest impact could be defined as the quality of the music, the quality of the promotional material, accurate targeting, professionalism, understanding of the other side’s needs, wants and resources and most importantly building and utilizing a strong professional network. Suggested further research could concern the correlation of media visibility and album sales.

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**Key words:** Promotion Publicity Marketing Communications  
Music Industry Mass Media

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Topic Overview

The music business is a high-risk business; it is hard to say in advance what it is exactly that makes an artist or a particular release a success. A talented artist alone is no guarantee for success, as it is the reaction of the audience that determines what rocks and what flops. Most important, naturally, is a good song. But it does not help to have a good song if it cannot be heard in the first place.

The purpose of promotion is to inform consumers about a product or service, persuade them of its value and continually reinforce their awareness of the product or service. While music promotion in its essence is no different from promotion in general, the specialty lies in that it is also about connecting the artist with the audience. Music, as a product and a service, is connected to emotions and heavily dependent on individual tastes.

Mass media has always been and needs to be very selective with regards to the artists they make visible to their audience. The record companies' task to pre-select artists and support those that in their opinion are worth pushing is still a valid one, but the development of technology has brought changes to the market. It has provided a platform for artists of all levels to in principle make their music available globally without having to be signed to a major record label, or even to a label at all. Consequently there is more music out there than can ever be heard by one person alone, let alone be discovered and the competition in the battle for media attention has become fierce. But with declining promotion budgets, especially at smaller independent record labels, artists depend more and more on publicity as a form of 'free' promotion.

In the case of well-known and established artists, media usually express their interest without the need for anyone even having to present the artist to them. With the biggest international acts the battle can be reversed; it is the artist that chooses the media, not the other way around. But the situation is somewhat different when it comes to new

artists or those not yet established in a particular market. Their representatives often feel at the mercy of the media when trying to get their artist heard and seen through media outlets. The vast amount of music available requires the product to stand out before it even gets heard, thus the difficulty in obtaining a piece of the publicity cake has shifted from the need for a good product to the need for a good product with an even better presentation.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to take a closer look at the media's role in music promotion with the focus on the concept of publicity, determine the stimuli for media's interest in an artist and define directions for a fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation between music companies and key media. The research is based on the Finnish market.

The following research questions need to be discussed:

- What does it need for a successful music promoter to break through all the noise in the market and create media interest for their artist?
- What are the writers/decision makers of various media outlets looking for?
- When does the attempt to get media representatives' attention turn into counterproductive pressure?
- What is the cooperation between music promoters and media representatives like and what can be done to improve or build a stronger partnership between them?

The intention is to compile the information and findings into a comprehensive package, which can provide a guideline for anyone involved and interested in music promotion in Finland. The document may also serve as food for thought as basis for further research.

## 1.3 Research Methods, Structure and Limitations

The first part of the thesis is an analysis of the two main industries this thesis concerns, music and media, which is based on a summary of information that is available on those industries. The purpose is to provide some background information on current music industry trends, the media environment and its role in music promotion.

The second part is based on both literature review of books, articles and online resources, as well as on professional and personal experiences and observations. Observations reflect to a great extent on my internship as promotion assistant with Supersounds Music, a distribution company for international indie labels located in Tampere. The purpose of this part is to create a framework for the research.

The third part of the thesis builds on empirical research, for which a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used. Firstly, an online survey was conducted with a number of representatives of Finnish media about their views on the relationship and cooperation between artists and their representatives and the media seen from a promotional angle. The survey aimed to find out how journalists get interested in an artist and what kind of promotional material or activities they regard as important for doing their jobs. Secondly, some interviews were conducted with selected industry and media professionals in order to obtain valid views, opinions and experiences from different players in the business. The interviews with media professionals were meant to find out more about how their media works and what influences their decision-making, while the interviews with marketing and promotion professionals aimed at discussing music promotion in general and at obtaining the information needed for the case study, which will look closer at a recent phenomenon on the Finnish music market and how it came to be.

The conducted research is mainly concerned with promoting via media channels through the means of publicity, as a more thorough discussion of marketing and promotion aspects would have exceeded the scope of this thesis. The findings of the thesis may suggest additional points that could be researched further.



Limiting to the research is an apparent scarcity of comprehensive information about the Finnish music industry due to the small market size. There is only limited amount of market-specific literature on music marketing available, most of which is written in Finnish language, which is not the author's native language. The majority of literature and Internet resources available on the broader topic of music marketing originate from the United States of America, which at approximately 30% of the global market value is considered the world's biggest market in the music industry. However, while general principles of marketing are globally applicable, they also need to be adapted to the local markets, as cultural issues, life styles, media habits and economic development of the target market influences their applicability and effectiveness.

## **2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **2.1 The Music Industry**

#### **2.1.1 Overview of the Music Industry**

The broader music industry comprises of various components: recorded music, live music, radio advertising, portable digital players, musical instruments, audio home systems, songwriters' musical copyright and music publishing, Music TV and magazine advertising, music related video games and performance rights market (IFPI 2010).

'Recorded music sales' in this study comprise of the revenues gained for recorded music (physical and digital) and the portion of performance rights collected for sound recordings and music videos. 'Trade value' refers to the record companies' net revenue, 'retail value' is the estimated final value paid by the consumer. 'Physical sales' refer to sales of physical products (music CDs and DVDs), 'digital sales' comprises sales of digital music files via online and mobile channels, and 'performance rights' cover monies received from music licensing companies for the third-party use of sound recordings and music videos in broadcasting, public performances and certain internet uses (IFPI 2010).

Globally trade revenues for recorded music totalled at 17 billion US Dollars in 2009, which compared to 2008 is a decline of 7.2% (Table 1). The shift from physical to digital sales continues and digital channels account now for 25% of all music sales. Revenues from performance rights also grew strongly. In retail terms, the global recorded music market was worth an estimated 25.4 billion US Dollars in 2008 (IFPI 2010).

**Table 1: Global Recorded Music Sales (in bn US Dollars) (IFPI 2010)**

	2008	2009	Change in %
Physical	13,674	11,934	-12.7%
Digital	3,944	4,307	9.2%
Performance Rights	729	785	7.6%
<b>Total Market</b>	<b>18,347</b>	<b>17,026</b>	<b>-7.2%</b>

Only a handful of companies are dominating market for recorded music. The four major recording labels Warner Music, Sony Music, Universal Music, and EMI control roughly three quarters of the global recorded music sales. 48 of the global Top-50 selling albums were released by one of the 'big four' (IFPI 2010).

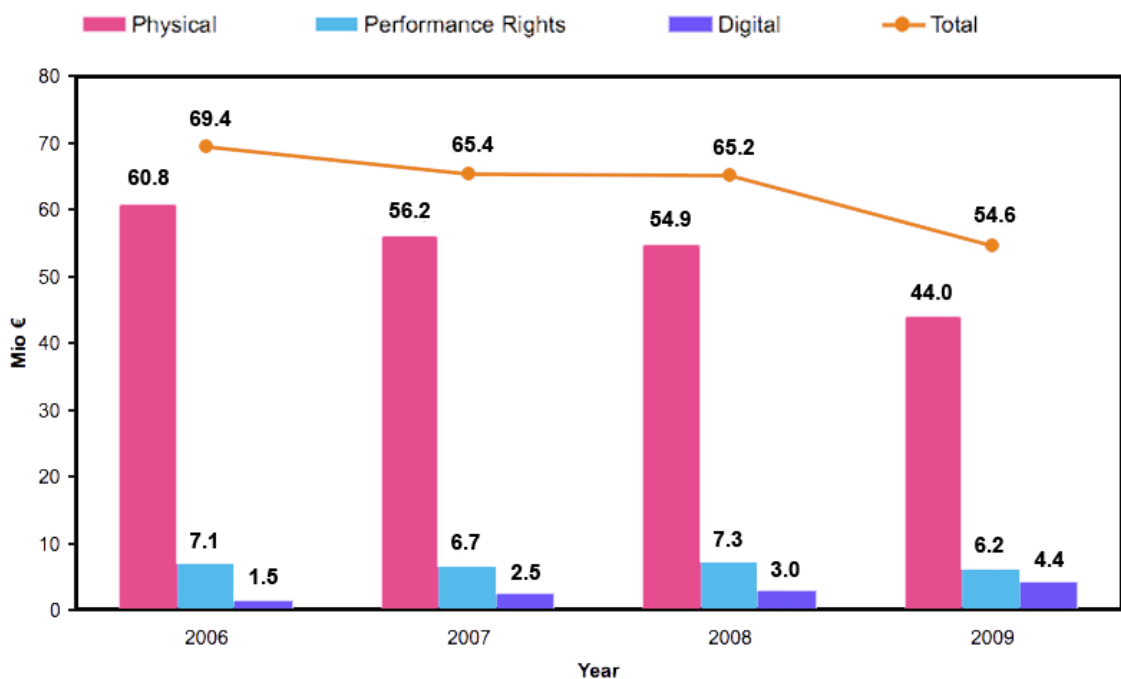
The top five global markets are USA, Japan, UK, Germany and France. While the USA rank number one in digital sales with iTunes now being their biggest music retailer at 25% market share, Japan holds the top position in physical sales and with a trade value of 122.5 million US Dollars the UK ranks first in the performance rights sector (IFPI 2010).

The permanent and rapid technological innovation causes the music industry to experience a major revolution. Internet piracy is to a big extent blamed for the industry's economic decline, but the changing music consumption pattern of consumers and the massive oversupply of music also need to be taken into consideration. Looking beyond CD sales, the overall music market is vibrant and alive. Music is not disappearing out of people's lives; on the contrary, music is consumed more than ever before (Kusek and Leonhard 2005, 6).

Revenues from licensing deals, live performances and merchandise sales are becoming more and more important; artists are touring harder than ever before. While performing live is considered the best possible way for an artist to promote themselves, it is not necessarily a revenue stream that can solely sustain an artist’s living. Ged Doherty (in IFPI 2010), chairman and chief executive of Sony Music UK and Ireland, explains that *“an artist usually has to sell their core product – recordings – before they can become well-known enough to generate money through the sale of live tickets and merchandise.”*

### 2.1.1 The Music Industry in Finland: Market Overview

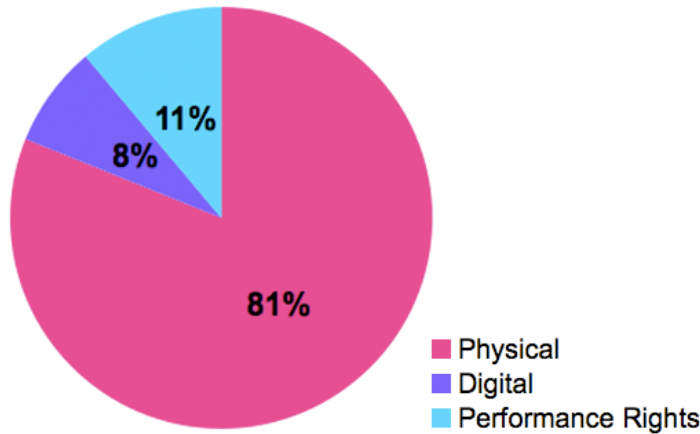
The downward trend for physical sales, as well as the upward development for digital sales continued also in 2009. Last year 5.1 million units of physical CDs and 1.2 million digital album downloads were sold in Finland. Total revenue from sales of physical and digital products and performance rights<sup>1</sup> was 54.6 million Euros, which is a massive decline of 16.3% compared to 2008 (IFPI 2010) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Finland - Recorded Music Sales Trend (IFPI 2010)**

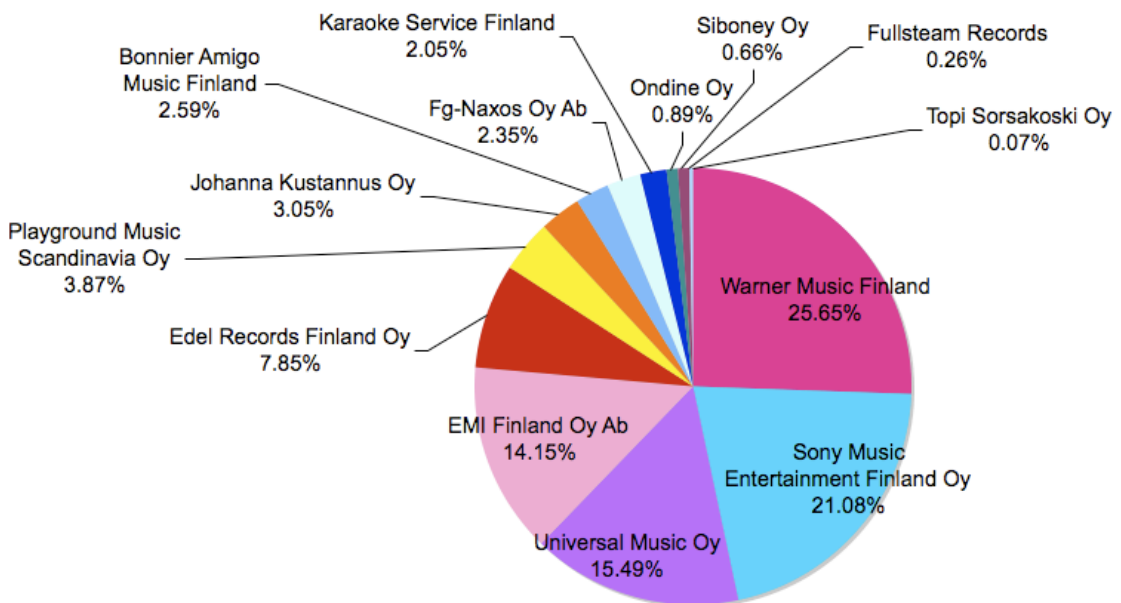
<sup>1</sup> Performance rights: monies received from licensing of broadcasting and performing rights for recordings to third parties (IFPI 2010).

Despite the growing digital market and decline in physical sales, 81% of total revenues still came from sales of physical products, compared to only 8% from digital sales. Performance rights revenues stand for 11% of total trade value (IFPI 2010) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Finland - Recorded Music Sales by Sector (IFPI 2010)**

In terms of total market size, Finland continues to rank at number 25 in the global music industry. The four majors (Warner Music, Sony Music, Universal Music, EMI) have the largest market share for recorded music in Finland; they stand for 77% of the total revenue. The remaining 23% come from independent label groups (IFPI 2010). (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Finland - Record Company Market Shares 2009 (IFPI 2010)**

It is, however, important to keep in mind that the above figures do not represent the entire Finnish market, as the reports from IFPI<sup>2</sup> only reflect on the revenues of their members (currently the four majors and 21 smaller indie labels), who stand for approximately 86% of the market share of the total music market in Finland. The figures do not take into consideration revenues earned by other Finnish indies, such as the 51 current members of IndieCo ry<sup>3</sup> and other small labels as well as distribution companies not affiliated with any trade group.

The Finnish market is dominated by domestic music. Out of the Top-50 sold albums in 2009, 34 were the works of domestic artists and only 16 were from international artists. In Top-10 sellers, seven Finnish releases were to be found (Pennanen 2010).

Out of the 51 Gold records awarded in 2009, 34 were awarded to Finnish artists and 17 to international artists. 12 of the awarded albums were released through an indie label, while the majority of 39 came from one of the four majors. Furthermore there were five international and 12 domestic Platinum awards, one international and two domestic Double-Platinum awards and one international Triple-Platinum award<sup>4</sup>. All of these concerned releases by major labels (IFPI 2010).

The popularity of Finnish music, especially in the genres of rock and metal music, on international level fosters a great export business. According to Nordic Music Exports the 2008 market value of Finnish music exports was 26 million Euros (Hildibrandsdóttir and Power 2009). A substantial part of this export revenue is generated from touring, which includes fees, ticket sales and merchandise.

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<sup>2</sup> IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry) is the international trade association of the recording industry worldwide. ÄKT (Suomen Ääni- ja kuvatalennetuottajat) is the Finnish national group of IFPI.

<sup>3</sup> IndieCo ry: Suomen riippumattomien levy- ja tuotantoyhtiöiden yhdistys = Association of Finnish Independent Labels.

<sup>4</sup> Finnish Certification Award levels (album unit sales): Gold 10,000 (international repertoire) / 15,000 (domestic repertoire), Platinum: 20,000 (international repertoire) / 30,000 (domestic repertoire). For any releases after 1st January 2010 the same levels apply for both, international and domestic albums: Gold 10,000 and Platinum 20,000 (IFPI 2010).

### 2.1.3 Music Industry in Finland: SWOT Analysis

#### *Strengths*

- One of the technologically most advanced countries in the world
- Large consumer interest for entertainment products and services
- Music is, and will be, everywhere
- Population has a high level of culture appreciation
- Good digital distribution network and possibilities
- High popularity of Finnish artists on international level

#### *Weaknesses*

- Weak distribution network for physical products; only very few and small specialized music stores – most sales concentrate on department stores and a few online stores
- Market is considered small, thus rather insignificant, by international artists
- Geographical location is not attractive for live performances of international artists (although the infrastructure that is available for live events is reasonably well developed)

#### *Opportunities*

- Increasing disposable income and generous spending patterns for entertainment
- Technological innovation presents new distribution channels, e.g Internet and mobile platforms
- Exploitation of cooperation with Nokia, Finland's world-leading manufacturer and developer of mobile devices and technologies (Gartner Inc 2010)
- Modern technologies provide great opportunities for building followings and maintaining closer artist-fan relationships
- Digital market development
- Product innovation and generation of alternative revenue streams
- Consumers' desire to not only listen but also experience and interact with music
- Better utilization of existing infrastructure for live events
- Globalization (easy access to new markets and export opportunities for recorded and live music)

### ***Threats***

- Violation of intellectual property rights through piracy (CD copying and illegal downloading)
- Lack of quality content
- Continuing global recession
- Extremely competitive marketplace means uncertainty about success
- Consumers are offered increasingly more choices of media products and services
- Very quick changes in consumer behaviour
- Limited growth potential for recorded music
- Release date variations<sup>5</sup> and increasingly competitive pricing make buying music abroad more attractive for end consumers and wholesalers alike
- Globalization (consumers can get what they want from wherever they want)

## **2.2 Media**

### **2.2.1 Media Sectors and Outlets**

Media is a collective term used to refer to both the means of mass communication, as well as the group of professionals operating in various media sectors. What kind of media the music promoter targets in the quest for publicity depends on the kind of audience that wants to be reached (Lathrop 2003, 139).

Mass media can be categorized into three main sectors: print media, broadcast media and Internet-based media. The most important outlets for each media sectors are listed below.

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<sup>5</sup> Release day for new releases is in most of the world markets Monday, except for Germany (Friday) and Finland (Wednesday). Consequently Finnish consumers and retailers face two to five days delay in obtaining international releases, leading some to order from foreign sources, which in turn affects Finnish sales figures.



### ***Print media***

- music press (papers and magazines)
- youth magazines
- daily national and regional newspapers
- weekly newspapers
- tabloids
- general interest magazines that cover music-related subjects (e.g. lifestyle, entertainment and women's magazines)
- trade publications

### ***Broadcast media***

- national radio
- commercial music and talk radio
- TV news programmes, prime-time news magazines, talk shows, music and entertainment programmes
- music TV
- club DJs

### ***Internet-based media***

- music webzines
- general interest webzines that cover music-related subjects
- web presences of print and broadcasting media outlets
- music blogs

The extent of an audience's media involvement can, according to Tunstall (in Rayner, Wall and Kruger 2001, 135)<sup>6</sup>, be divided into three levels.

***Primary media involvement:*** the audience is exclusively concentrating on consuming the media, for example by attentively watching a TV programme or conscientiously reading a newspaper.

***Secondary media involvement:*** the audience's concentration to the media is shared with another distraction, for example doing some household work while watching TV or listening to music while reading a magazine.

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<sup>6</sup> Original source: Tunstall, Jeremy (1983). *The Media in Britain*. London: Constable & Co. Ltd

***Tertiary media involvement:*** the media is only consumed in the background and the audience does not really concentrate on it, for example peeking at someone's newspaper on a crowded train or catching a glimpse of the running TV in a bar.

## 2.2.2 Media Environment in Finland

The media landscape in Finland is limited in size and diversification, which is pretty much in balance with the market size of the country. The majority of media professionals know each other, and many of the journalists are servicing more than one particular media. As previously established, the Finnish market is dominated by domestic music, thus also the Finnish media's interest in domestic artists is very high.

### ***Print media***

To the most important music press belong magazines *Rumba*, *Rytmi*, *Soundi*, *Inferno* and the free music paper *Sue*. All of these focus on music and entertainment and feature news, stories, interviews and reviews of releases and performances. Also youth magazines *Suosikki*, *Demi* and *Miss Mix* have dedicated music sections. In addition lifestyle magazines such as *Image* also follow what is happening in the music world.

Most regional daily newspapers as well as the big evening newspapers *Ilta-lehti* and *Ilta-Sanomat* have culture sections, in which also music news, articles and reviews are published. These kinds of papers are usually most interested in covering the artists that will be performing in the paper's respective distribution region. The biggest daily newspapers also have colour supplements that come with the paper once a week. The most important of these supplements is *Nyt*, which is a part of the Friday issue of Finland's most influential daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. These supplements contain event calendars and are a good source for listings; in addition they also contain news and articles on selected artists. Another paper for listings is the free city magazine *City*, of which regional versions are printed for each of the bigger cities.

All of the magazines and papers also have their online presence, to which some of the publication's content and in some cases also additional content, e.g. reviews, is fed. Some of the publications even have dedicated culture and music blogs, such as the Swedish-language *Nöjesbloggen* that is part of *Hufvudstadsbladet*.

### **Radio**

The most influential radio station in Finland when it comes to Pop and Rock is YLE's youth radio *YleX*. The channel features a lot of new music, various special music programmes and also connects to *YleX Arena*, which accommodates streaming audio and video of *YleX* studio guests as well as certain live appearances, for example concerts from major festivals. Another YLE youth radio is Swedish-language channel *Radio X3M*, who often also cooperate with *YleX* in terms of sharing English-speaking interviews and studio guest features for special music shows. Both channels belong to Finland's non-commercial national broadcasting company YLE, which also owns several other radio channels such as a channel for classic music, as well as a couple of news radio channels that play some music to a broad audience, but are not dedicated music radios, thus not of such high importance when it comes to new music and airplay.

Other nationwide playlisting radio channels that can offer a lot of exposure for an artist are *NRJ*, *Radio Rock*, *The Voice Radio* and *Radio Nova*. Especially the hit radios' (*NRJ*, *The Voice* and *Nova*) playlists are, according to Ahokas, Nikula and Pesonen (2004, 125), generally only accessible for artists that release through one of the major labels. A playlist determines how often a particular song is played during the regular daily programme; it has no effect on the content of special shows. A jury consisting of the channel's music manager and selected other radio staff determine, in weekly meetings, which of the new releases will be playlisted. The intensity of rotation and duration of a song's playlisting is dependent on call-ins, requests and votes from the channel's listeners. Contrary to possible practices in some other countries, airtime on Finnish radio cannot be obtained by money (YleX).

In addition to some smaller genre specific channels, e.g. *Radio Iskelmä*, there are also several local channels, such as the SBS group radios *Radio 957* (Tampere), *Radio Sata*

(Turku), *Radio Mega* (Oulu) and *Radio Jyväskylä*. Those stations are smaller and less influential, but offer nevertheless good possibilities for exposure of contemporary music, for example in connection with live appearances in the area.

Another influential 'in' station that broadcasts only in the Helsinki region is *Radio Helsinki*. This non-playlist channel belongs to Sanoma Oy, who also own Finland's biggest daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*.

Most of the radio stations also have a web presence, on which it is possible to listen to the channels' radio broadcasts online. Some stations, e.g. YleX, also feed their playlists to the digital music service Spotify.

## **TV**

Finland only has two music TV channels that show music videos and have special music programmes for presenting live shows, music documentaries and interview with artists: *The Voice TV* and *MTV Finland*.

Daily broadcasting time for *The Voice TV* is 17 hours, as they share a broadcasting slot with *TV Viisi*, which uses the timeframe of 18.00 until 1.00 every day (Telkku). *The Voice TV* is closely connected to *The Voice Radio*. The channel also has a web presence at *voice.fi* with an own online news desk and the possibility to watch some shows and videos online.

*MTV Finland* derived from the former MTV Nordic network. The channel's quality as dedicated music media has declined considerable in comparison to what MTV initially stood for and its status as music TV can be regarded as quite controversial, considering that the former core music programme has nowadays been replaced by American reality TV series. Some remaining music programmes are still aired, but not during prime time. On weekdays music programmes are broadcast on average for 12 hours a day during night time and in the mornings, at weekends the music content is reduced to as little as eight hours a day approximately (Telkku). Also *MTV Finland* has a web presence, where it is possible to watch some content online.

Individual music videos are shown occasionally also on *SubTV* between programmes, although this mainly concerns videos by artists of higher profile in connection with the release of a new album. Other TV channels do not have any dedicated music shows with music videos, artist interviews or studio guests anymore. YLE's former chart show *Lista* and music programme *Musiikki TV* were both suspended respectively in 2008 and 2009 (Wikipedia).

### ***Online media***

In recent years, several webzines have established themselves that report on music news and do a lot of album and gig reviews as well as interviews. Many of the webzines often specialize in particular genres. Amongst the known webzines in Finland are for example *vertigo.cd*, *noise.fi*, *desibeli.net*, *meteli.net*, *imperiumi.net* and *rokkizine.fi*.

### **2.2.3 The Role of Media in the Promotion Process**

Media is a tool for achieving a greater public awareness of an artist, as an artist featured in the media is able to convey their message to the general public that is consuming the media; respectively to both an existing and a potential new audience (Ahokas et al. 2004, 123). In music promotion, media serves as a vehicle for both publicity and advertising.

While in advertising the brand itself claims its goodness, in publicity it is the media that effectively educate the consumers about the importance of a brand. People will assume that an artist must be good if the media is spreading the word about it. An important role of the music media professional in the music promotion process is to act as gatekeeper and tastemaker. Hereby the media professional's task is it to "*monitor the constant worldwide flood of new data and report only the information deemed most appropriate for targeted readers, viewers, and listeners*" (Lathrop 2003, 139). Because editorial coverage is based on objective opinions, it is highly credible and can considerably influence the buying decisions of consumers as well as those of wholesalers, retailers

and concert promoters, as an artist with high presence in media will give them greater certainty of satisfactory CD or ticket sales.

Contrary to publicity in printed press, publicity on radio and TV does not end with getting only news coverage. It is more importantly about getting an artist's music heard, and in the case of TV also seen, by the masses. If listeners and viewers are exposed to the music and end up liking it, they are also more likely to buy it (Lathrop 2003, 171, 172).

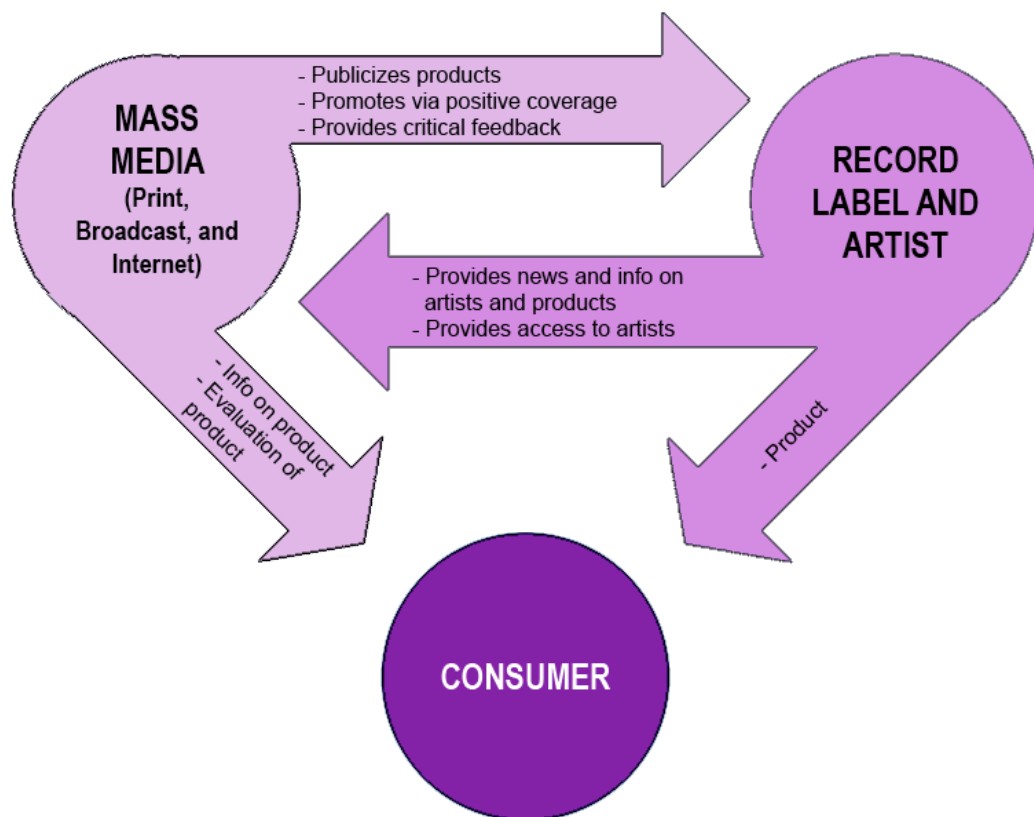
There are three important tasks for a music promoter when trying to gain media publicity (Lathrop 2003, 138):

- get the most possible coverage on a broad range of media
  - reach a large number of people
- get coverage in the most appropriate media
  - focus directly on the target audience
- attempt to control the content of the coverage
  - publicity quality control

It is important to keep in mind, however, that high media exposure does not necessarily equal sky-high record sales, sold-out concert halls and groups of screaming fans outside an artist's front door (Ahokas et al. 2004, 128). At the end of the day publicity merely guides the audience, but it is still the audience's reaction to the artist and the music that determines the commercial success.

Editors-in-chief, often alongside the journalists themselves, do have power over what they will publish and what they will not. Programme directors, content managers, producers and DJs in radio and TV do have power over what kind of music they will broadcast through their channels. Their decision may depend on a number of factors, e.g. internal priorities, space restrictions, relevance to the current situation or competing topics. Trying to force their interest will neither be of help in getting media coverage for the artist nor be of advantage for a future fruitful relationship between the media and the artist's promotion team.

However, Ahokas et al. (2004, 126) point out that the relationship between artists and the media can ultimately be seen as symbiotic, as both need each other. Also Lathrop (2003, 138) reminds us that media and music promoters have an interdependent relationship with each other, and that music promoters should not see themselves in a weaker position because of having to beg for media coverage. It is not all about the media being of important promotional value for an artist's career building, but the media also depend on artist representatives as a reliable source for information as well as provider of news and access to the artists and their music (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Interdependence of the Mass Media and the Recording Industry**  
(Lathrop 2003, 139)

## 3 MUSIC MARKETING AND PROMOTION

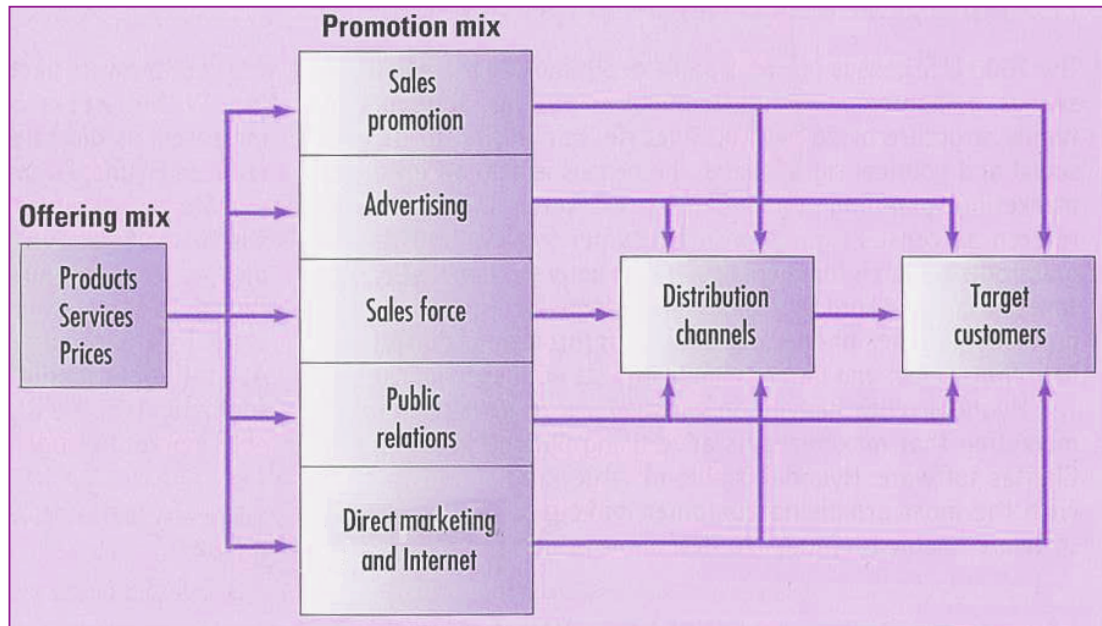
### 3.1 The Marketing Mix

Promotion is one of the 4 Ps of the marketing mix, originally defined by Neil Borden: Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

The P for Product concerns everything that has to do with the development of the actual product or service; that is production, quality, value and packaging. The P for Price stands for the pricing strategy that is used for the product or service in order to offer pricing that is balanced between affordability, profitability and competitiveness (Lathrop 2003, 25). The P for Place refers to the distribution of the product or service and how conveniently it is made available to the consumer.

The P for Promotion refers to the marketing communication, which includes advertising, publicity, Internet exposure and sales incentives. Promotion is naturally vital for the marketing process, because the existence and the benefits of a product or service have to somehow be communicated to the consumers. Objectives of promotional activities are to increase public awareness, and attraction, of the brand and product; consequently to stimulate demand (Lathrop 2003, 2, 25, 137). Figure 5 shows how the components of the marketing mix act in combination with each other and which role the elements of the Promotion-P play thereby.





**Figure 5: Marketing Mix Strategy** (Kotler 2003, 16)

Sales Promotion comprises any short-term sales incentives that are designed to attract attention to a product or service and encourage its purchase, such as samples, trials, coupons, prizes, price-offs or cross-promotion (Kotler 2003, 609). While such activities may boost sales in the short term, they will normally not aid in establishing a long-term brand preference.

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation of the brand, product or service by an identified sponsor, the advertising medium (Kotler 2003, 590). Advertising is designed to educate consumers about a reason to buy a particular product or service and build brand preference (Kotler 2003, 609). While it is possible to reach a large audience and target selectively in terms of geographic and demographic factors, overall costs can often be quite high.

Sales force (also: personal selling) is a company's direct link to the consumer with the purpose of personally communicating information about the products and services and closing sales. The aim of personal interaction is not only to build a strong customer relationship, but at the same time gather useful information in terms of consumer wants, needs and preferences. Sales force is the most costly element in the promotion mix, as expenses for skilled human resources are steadily rising.

Public relations (PR) concentrate on getting appropriate publicity for the brand, product or service, for example through favourable news and media coverage, events or sponsorships. PR enables a message to reach broad audiences in a relatively inexpensive manner and can help to build, but in case of negative PR also damage, a good brand image.

Direct marketing makes use of communication channels to reach and interact with targeted consumer segments. Such channels are, for example, direct mail in traditional form, catalogues, telemarketing, Internet and interactive web applications and mobile devices. While the initial aim of direct marketing is a measurable customer response, it is nowadays often used for customer relationship marketing in order to build long lasting relationships with customers (Kotler 2003, 620).

All elements of the promotion mix build inevitably on the concepts of individual and mass communication and brand management. The media environment is mainly concerned with PR and advertising.

Kotler (2003, 17) highlights that the 4 Ps, however, represent the marketing tools from the seller's perspective and that there is need for marketing to focus more on the customer. He therefore supports Lauterborn's (1990) argument to forget about product, price, promotion and place altogether and put the focus on a consumer-oriented marketing mix instead. The 4 Cs describe from the buyer's point of view the benefit that is to be delivered by each of the 4 marketing tools (Table 2).

**Table 2: The 4 Ps and Cs of Marketing**

Seller's 4 Ps (tools)		Consumer's 4 Cs (benefits)
Product	→	Consumer Solution
Price	→	Consumer Cost
Place	→	Convenience
Promotion	→	Communication

From the consumer's point of view this means:

- No product is made or service rendered because it is just what the company does, but a product or service can be tailored as a specific solution for a particular consumer's wants and needs.
- No pricing based on profit only, but also consideration for the consumer's overall cost to satisfy their want or need. It is not only the monetary value of the product that is relevant for the consumer, but also the opportunity cost of making the purchase as well as virtual values, such as time, convenience or conscience.
- No sticking like glue to the traditional or induced limitations of distribution channels, but embracing the available opportunities to offer 'convenience to buy' based on each market segment's preferences.
- No manipulative promotion and fake sales talk, but clear and honest two-way communication.

### **3.1.2 The 4 Ps and Cs for the Product Music**

Lauterborn's concept of the 4 Cs is a logical evolution of the 4Ps and a result of consumer-oriented thinking. But instead of completely eliminating the 4 Ps, a good balance should be found that benefits both, the consumer and the seller.

The most effective marketing mix communicates information and consumer benefit of a product or service openly and efficiently and makes it reasonable and convenient for the target group to obtain it. In the music business this goes for end consumers as well as gatekeepers and tastemakers (e.g. key media, influential industry associates), as the latter form an inevitable additional promotional 'tool' for artists and music companies in getting the message across to the end consumer. It is therefore important to apply the marketing mix not only to the consumer, but also to the media, in order to obtain the desired part of the promotional mix: publicity.

### ***P for Product and C for Consumer Solution***

The basis for a successful music release or music event is that it is exactly what the consumer is longing for. As music is a product that is tightly connected to emotions and entirely dependent on individual tastes, it is unfortunately impossible to foresee exactly how people will react to it. The music professional's intuition and the company's willingness to take reasonable risks are therefore inevitable.

Music as the core product should be innovative and unique in itself. But it is then up to the music company to offer the consumer high-quality product solutions or a unique service experience with that core product; one they cannot get elsewhere, and one they can only obtain by buying the product or service.

It is not the intention to leave the artist out of consideration when looking at this, but a true artist will do what they want to do from the heart. The creation of music is a way for artists to express themselves, naturally in the hope that also an audience will share their enthusiasm for the creations. Even though in some cases the artist may create the music especially for a niche market or a certain consumer group, e.g. music for children, art is not (or should not be) meant to exclusively please the consumer, because that would be a betrayal of artistic value and ideals. Neither should the record companies interfere with the artistic freedom by trying to make an artist something they are not.

So for music companies the development of the core product music is not about dictating an artist on what to do and what not, but to strictly make the best possible pre-selection of artists that they add to their roster. From the artist's point of view this might seem unfavourable, as with extremely selective record companies it will naturally be much harder for anyone to get a record deal. But the current oversupply of low-quality music, or even music in general, calls for a better pre-selection. Consumers are literally flooded with music and there is much more out there than any single person will ever be able to consume, or even find in the first place. It is up to the music companies to act as a first 'spam filter' and ensure higher quality content sits on their rosters.

### ***P for Price and C for Consumer Cost***

Price is often an important decision factor when buying music, attending a music event or buying the artist's merchandise products. The total consumer costs, monetary and virtual, need to be considered when stating to the consumer what the price of a product or service buys them. The key is to make the experience most valuable and meaningful to the individual consumer.

One thing to consider is the perceived value of the music; it is different for the various consumer groups. Die-hard fans will be willing to spend more on their favourite artist(s) than the average music consumer or non-traditional CD buyer, and even at the same price, a music product or service's sentimental value can vary a lot for each consumer group; in fact it will be different for each unique consumer.

A good way of targeting the initially same core product (music) or service to different consumer groups is the use of creative pricing. Offering different bundles or packages at different prices influences the perceived value of the product, thus delivers consumer value regardless of the consumer group.

An example for such creative pricing is American industrial rock act *Nine Inch Nails*' 'Ghosts I-IV' album. The 36-track instrumental album was released in March 2008 in a number of different formats that were initially made available through the band's website (Figure 6). The pricing options catered for everyone from random listener to die-hard fan and included:

**Free:** Download of the first nine tracks in DRM<sup>7</sup>-free mp3 format, including a 40-page photo book in pdf format and some digital computer graphics.

**\$5:** Download of all 36 tracks in DRM-free mp3 format, including a 40-page photo book in pdf format and some digital computer graphics.

**\$10:** 2CD set containing all 36 tracks in a six panel digipak package with a 16 page booklet. The purchase of the 2CD set also includes a one-time download link to the \$5 download.

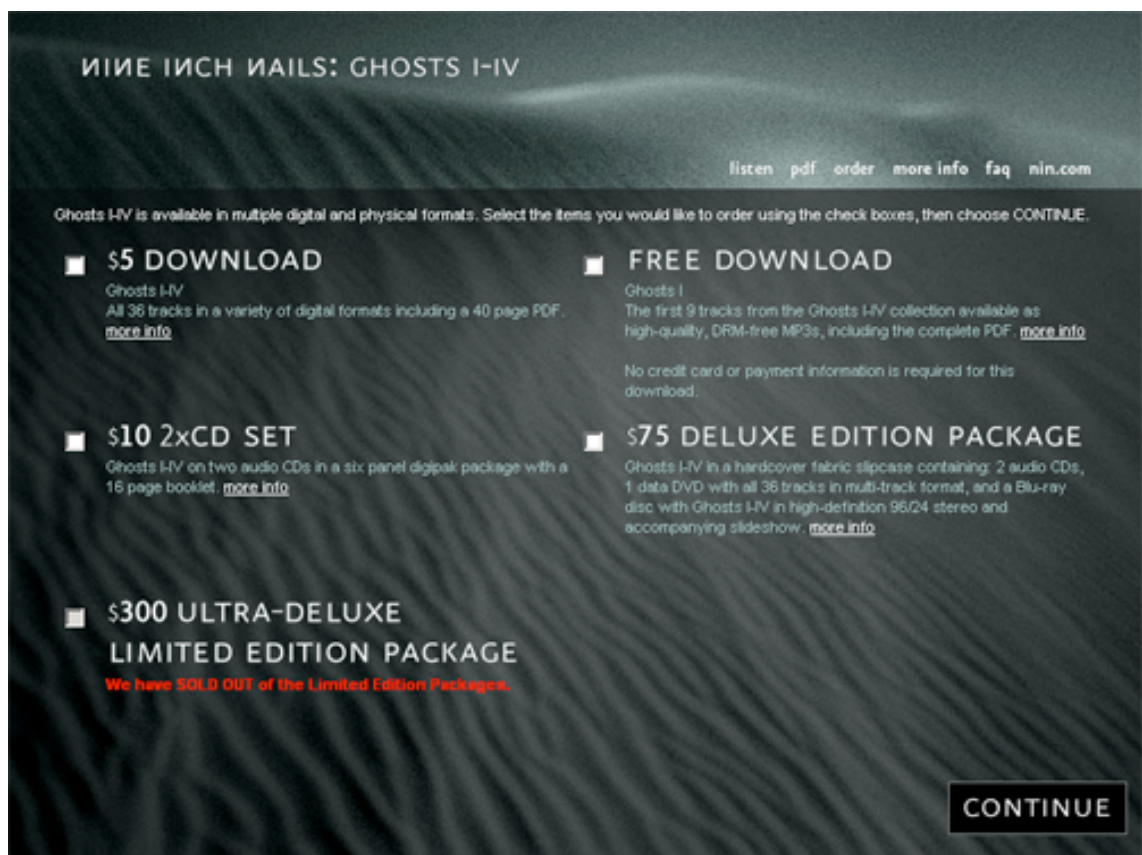
**\$75:** Deluxe Edition package in a hardcover fabric slipcase containing two audio CDs, one data DVD with all 36 tracks in multi-track format, and a Blu-ray disc with

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<sup>7</sup> DRM: Digital Rights Management. A technology used to prevent end users from copying or converting the file to other formats (Wikipedia).

all songs in high-definition stereo and accompanying slideshow. The purchase of the Deluxe Edition package also includes a one-time download link to the \$5 download.

**\$300:** Ultra-Deluxe Limited Edition package limited to 2500 copies, which contained of two boxes in a black fabric slipcase with a metal NIN logo and numeration tag. The first box contained three separate books. Book one had two audio CDs, one data DVD with all 36 tracks in multi-track format, and a Blu-ray disc with all songs in high-definition stereo and accompanying slideshow. Book two had 48 pages of photographs as visual accompaniment to the music, and is autographed by vocalist Trent Reznor. Book three had two exclusive Giclee art prints. The second box contained a 4LP set of ‘Ghosts I-IV’. All 2500 copies of the package sold out in only three days (Ars Technica 2008). The purchase of the Ultra-Deluxe Edition package also included a one-time download link to the \$5 download.



**Figure 6: Ordering Options for Nine Inch Nail’s ‘Ghosts I-IV’ Release (Nine Inch Nails)**

### ***P for Place and C for Convenience***

Modern technologies have made digital distribution possible, which in itself is a great way of delivering the music to audiences. Geographical distances are not important anymore, neither are languages, and it is an amazing achievement of our time that artists are able to spread their music globally and that consumers are easily able to find music from all over the world. Especially younger consumer groups, for whom digital technologies have been a part of their daily life for as long as they can remember, are more likely to value the convenience of having music available at the click of a button.

However, despite all technologies, digital products are not for everyone. Many consumer groups still prefer the whole package of a physical CD over a downloaded track they cannot touch. For them a physical CD with lavish packaging adds more value to the overall product experience, the elimination of which, in their opinion, cannot be justified by a small price difference or the instant delivery. Convenience for them is then associated with the process of obtaining the physical product.

Location and preferences of specific market segments need to be taken into consideration when it comes to the distribution of music. Music companies need to respond to the way people are consuming music, and consumer groups need to be given the opportunity to select themselves exactly what they want to buy and from where – and whichever format is most convenient for their individual wants and needs.

### ***P for Promotion and C for Communication***

Communication portrays both, a marketing channel as well as a customer benefit. Promotion is communicating the marketing message about the product's or service's existence and benefits to the consumer. If and how a marketing message is received and perceived by consumers depends on the effectiveness of the communication.

A well-thought-through combination of traditional and modern communication platforms will help to increase the chances for target groups to notice and remember the initial message especially in the introduction stage of a product or service, while, according to Kotler (2003, 582), demand has its own momentum in the growth stage through word of mouth. Especially in music promotion the power of word of mouth

cannot be underestimated, as its impact is often bigger than that of planned marketing communication. Keeping a core following involved and happy will make them a valuable promotional tool for the 'brand' (the artist) in general, thus also for any associated products and services.

The product or service must meet any expectations that are created by promotion. Promotion needs to be based on true facts, so essentially the product, the music, needs to be good. If the music is poor, no number of marketing mix components in the world can make it good. Dishonesty and fake promotion might be able to make something 'appear' good for a short time, but in the long run one cannot fool the consumers.

## 3.2 The Promotional Message

Many people, regardless if music professionals or not, tend to say that it is all about a good song. And yes, they are absolutely right. But if the existence of that song is not effectively communicated to gatekeepers and prospective target audience, then it will very likely not get heard in the first place. Promotion *is* communication.

The heart of the communications process is the message the sender (in this case: the artist or artist representative) transmits to the receiver (in this case: the media representatives and/or the prospective target audience). Kotler (2003, 569) as well as Lathrop (2003, 110) stress that a successful message ideally follows the AIDA principle:

- Grab **A**ttention → message needs to stand out
- Spark **I**nterest → clear and to-the-point information, spiced with an interesting fact
- Create **D**esire → what can the product or service do for the consumer
- Call to **A**ction → where and how can the consumer obtain the product or service



According to Kotler (2003, 565) there are three main reasons why a target group might not receive the intended message:

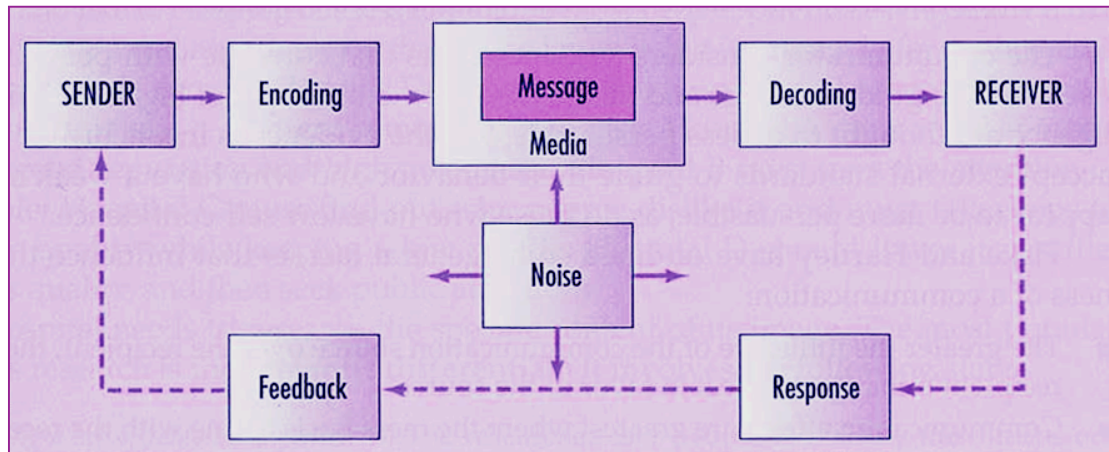
**Selective attention:** out of the approximately 1600 commercial messages people are bombarded with daily, they will consciously notice only 80 (5%), and reactions are provoked by as few as 12 messages (< 1%).

**Selective distortion:** the receiver of a message will only hear what they want to hear and what fits into their belief system; they therefore might add facts to the message that are not there or omit other facts that are there.

**Selective retention:** people will only retain a fraction of the messages that eventually reach them, and are most likely to recall something that initially evoked a positive feeling.

From these theories it can be presumed that the sent message needs to be clear, simple, interesting and repetitive. Unlike most other products, music is extremely dependent on an individual's tastes and emotions, which leads to the assumption that a message, which in any form contains a sample of the music, may aid in creating desire more easily.

Surrounding the communicating parties, tools and functions lies plenty of noise (Figure 7). In communications, noise not only refers to physical noise that may distract the communicating parties or falsify the message, but it also refers to any kind of "*random and competing messages that may interfere with the intended communication*" (Kotler 2003, 565). While in today's mass communication environment it is not possible to entirely eliminate noise in the communications process, the impact of noise may be minimized by effective communication: a message that follows the AIDA principle, transmitted to the identified target audience through an appropriate communication channel.



*Figure 7: The Elements of the Communication Process (Kotler 2003, 565)*

### 3.3 Promotional Components of Music Marketing

A complete promotion package makes use of all available promotional tools and is designed to promote both the product (= music) as well as the brand (= artist). Before deciding on which of the tools are to be used to what extent, the marketing professional needs to identify the target group for the artist's music and which motives that group has for consuming the music. They then need to define the promotional message and how and through which promotion outlets this message should be communicated.

The responsibility for effective promotion lies not only with the artist representative whose task it is to promote the artist, but as it becomes clear when looking at the various promotional tools for music, the artist themselves needs to be involved in the actual promotion processes at a very high level as well. It is the responsibility of the artist's management and the record company to provide means and possibilities for the artist to actively engage in various promotional activities.

The most important item in music promotion and basis for everything else is naturally a song. It is common, especially in popular music genres, to release a potential hit song as *single* before the release of an entire album, and one or more further singles during the album's introduction and growth stages. The aim of singles is to obtain a lot of airplay, thus they will get heard and if the audience develops an interest in the artist and in the

music they might want to obtain the album. Promotional singles and albums should naturally be supplied to key media and club DJs, and possibly also to a selection of appropriate stores, in which a possible target group is likely to shop, e.g. clothing stores.

Ever since the MTV came to be in the Eighties, *music videos* have become a valuable tool to promote a song aided by visuals. Getting a music video played on dedicated music TV channels is, however, even more difficult than getting airplay on the radios. The choices for music TV channels to approach are, in comparison to radio stations, massively limited and the once traditional 24/7 music channels, such as MTV, seem nowadays more interested in broadcasting reality TV than promoting new artists (King 2009, 104). However, modern technology has in recent years provided other possibilities to show and spread music videos as well as other low-budget video footage easily and effectively through convenient online outlets, such as YouTube, MySpace or Vevo. What is more is that advancing technologies provide opportunities to create great and interesting music videos also on low budgets. As J. Max Robbins, vice president and executive director of the Paley Center's Media and International Council, noted that *"anybody with a digital camera and their MacBook can do a pretty credible video. With a little imagination, of course."* (NPR)

The *Internet* has developed to be a massively significant promotion tool for music. While traditional marketing channels, such as TV, radio or printed press, are still of high importance, they cannot provide the consumer with what they want these days: opportunities for interaction through a media. According to recent research conducted by Taloustutkimus Oy (2007) on behalf of Sanomalehtien Liitto<sup>8</sup>, the Internet has become the main communication media for youth and ranks in terms of importance, as well as preference, far higher than TV. The Internet serves as all-in-one tool for an artist to share the latest news, present songs, show videos, provide information about upcoming shows, sell music and non-music merchandise, connect with fans and enable them to communicate with each other as well.

It naturally starts with the artist's own media, namely the *artist's website*. It typically contains at least some basic biography about the artist and an overview of their works, a

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<sup>8</sup> Sanomalehtien Liitto = The Finnish Newspapers Association

news section, a list of upcoming live performances, a few visuals and audio samples, contact information for press and music professionals as well as a chat room or message board for fans to connect with each other. There is no limit for additional content, such as advanced information about the music, lyrics, links to press clippings and interviews, links to other sites affiliated with the artist, the artist's own store or a dedicated press section with protected access to the press information. The content should be clearly structured and easy to read and navigate; visually attracting but not too overloaded. Nothing is worse for a visitor than having to wait for fancy things to load or spending too much time trying to find the information they are looking for. Needless to say that the artist's website as well as any of the other Internet outlets should be kept up-to-date at all times, as they serve as an information medium to both, the artist's existing and prospective following as well as to media and other industry representatives.

Profiles on numerous *social networking sites*, such as Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, Youtube, Last.fm, Spotify, ReverbNation, Bebo, IRC-Galleria and Royal Artist Club (RAC), to name only a few, are a must in this time and age. Profiles on those sites provide a direct connection from the artist to fans, who, by 'liking' or 'following', are publicly endorsing the artist. Social networking sites also give the artist the possibility to present sound samples and video clips, so the visitor can get familiar with the music. In turn the visitors can share what they like with their friends, which massively supports the word of mouth process, and the artist's supporters can of course also connect with each other. There are hundreds of social networking places available, with new ones emerging all the time. It will be impossible to be everywhere, but it is important to have a presence in at least a few major ones. The artist should select those that have most relevance for their target audience and appear convenient enough to maintain, but only as many as can be maintained properly. Many of these profiles can nowadays be synchronized with each other or support widgets of other applications, so that one update to a certain profile can appear in real-time on at least some of the other online presences.

*Word of mouth (WOM)* is considered a prime marketing tool and an especially crucial component in music promotion. It is a credible form of promotion because people find messages or recommendations more believable when they come from someone they

know and trust. WOM needs to build over time, but nowadays the Internet provides a powerful tool for virally spreading the word and speeding up the process. Chances are that if lots of people are talking about an artist or a song, it will eventually also reach a gatekeeper that can open more doors, e.g. for more publicity or live performances. Recruiting street teams and working with fan clubs can aid in the process to get the word out, but it needs to be remembered that those dedicated fans do this for free, so it should be no question to show appreciation for their work and keep them motivated by rewarding good work for example with some freebies or access to special events.

In general, fan-friendliness, approachability and *interaction with fans* can help a good deal when turning a small flame into a fire. Genuinely engaging with the audience by providing regular information and being accessible is key to keeping a loyal following and gaining a bigger audience. Fans act as filters for each other and by talking about and publicly endorsing an artist and sharing news, music and videos in online presences they can guide their peers to discover artists and music that were previously unknown to them. There is not much needed for interacting with an audience; it is simple for any artist to use online tools to keep their following up-to-date about recent activities in a rather informal style. It does not mean that the artist has to spend the entire day updating their Facebook, Twitter or blog but a few minutes every now and then to communicate towards the fans, e.g. by posting a photo, some behind-the-scene video footage or a short greeting, might just make the fans' day and keep them engaged and supportive.

Fans today want to interact with the artist not only through various online tools, but also face-to-face. This form of interaction can take place for example at signing sessions, meet & greets or more intimate in-store appearances, although those possibilities are largely depending on the artist's current success level. As another example can be named Finnish rock band *Uniklubi*, who only recently provided a good opportunity for their fans to interact with the band and even contribute to the content production. The band was shooting the video for their upcoming new single in Tampere and needed a crowd for this purpose. A few days before the video shoot they announced on their website and social networking profiles the location and time of the happening and asked their fans to come and bring their friends along as well (Figure 8).

## AVUSTAJIA ETSITÄÄN MAAILMA PUHALTAA-MUSIIKKIVIDEOON!

8.10.2010, 9:40 | Uutiset

Uniklubi ja Tuotantoyhtiö Legenda Oy hakevat avustajia Uniklubin Maailma puhaltaa –musiikkivideon joukkokohtaukseen. Aika: tiistai 12.10.2010 klo 16:30 – 18:00, paikka: kohtaus kuvataan Tampereella Tampellan alueella Alaverstaanraitin ja Keernakadun kulmassa. Haemme kaikenikäisiä avustajia vauvasta vaariin. Ota kaverisi mukaan ja tule sellaisena kuin olet! Lisätietoja: [legenda@akuntehdas.fi](mailto:legenda@akuntehdas.fi).

Jaa rakkautta:     

 Tykkää **16**

3 kommenttia >

**Figure 8: Announcement about the Video Shoot on Uniklubi's Website (Uniklubi)**

*Live performances* in front of an audience are a form of direct promotion. When performing live, the artist is directly communicating with the audience with the goal to get them interested in the music and eventually buy the music, if they have not already done so. When Mike King (2009, 169) states that *"nothing helps to build a devoted fan base quicker than an absolutely amazing live show"*, he is absolutely right, because at live shows, the audience will not only get to hear the music but also experience the way it is presented by the artists. A good way to get exposure in front of a new audience, especially for newer artists, is to secure the possibility as support act for a bigger, already established artist, and play local shows or even a whole leg of a tour with them.

Upcoming live appearances also make a good 'story', with which a music promoter may be able to obtain publicity especially with local media. Not only may they be prepared to list the event and review it, but they may also, for example, publish an article about the artist in their media, invite them as studio guests or give them more airplay.

Live performances also provide the opportunity for an artist to sell their music directly at the event; not only the CDs but also non-musical *merchandise*, such as clothing items or memorabilia with the artist's name, logo or picture. Artist merchandise is not only an additional income stream but it also serves promotional purposes when the owners of band t-shirts or other clothing items proudly become walking advertisements. Official artist merchandise should also be available through an online outlet and, if possible, through selected physical stores. For additional visibility, record labels and distributors should also supply staff at record stores and venues with artist t-shirts to wear, especially in connection with the release of a new album.

Traditional *printed promotional items*, such as posters, flyers and stickers can be used to advertise releases or events. Those items are shown or handed out at events, in venues, stores and on public poster and advertising boards. Flyers and stickers can also serve as direct mail to customers buying music related products; e.g. record stores or scene clothing stores can pack those into customer shopping bags or mail order packages.

*Sales incentives* are not so much designed for raising awareness of the product but more for making the product more attractive for the consumer to buy by adjusting the perceived value. Use of sales incentives depend on the stage of the product life cycle. For music products, sales incentives could be creatively priced product bundles according to target group (e.g. CD + shirt; CD + concert ticket; CD + LP), special product launch packages, signed albums or limited editions. To encourage sales the label's or artist's own web store could offer bonuses for orders of a certain value, loyalty schemes or discounts for referring new customers.

A further promotional activity that can get a song heard by a broad audience is *music licensing* for radio and TV commercials, videos, movie soundtracks, TV series and interactive media. With the right contacts and good timing this option is open to established and new artists alike. Appearances at charity concerts or participation in certain campaigns are also opportunities to receive additional publicity. However, the main factor for an artist's decision to participate in such activities should be that the artist to 100% stands behind the content or event their music will be associated with.

Doing any of these activities entirely for the sake of additional exposure, is not the way forward as it can damage the artist's reputation and sincerity in the long run.

Paid **advertising** in music promotion is mainly used to support media publicity and airplay in order to draw additional attention to the artist and the music (Lathrop 2003, 191). Advertising is defined as "*the activity of explicitly paying for media space or time in order to direct favourable attention to certain goods or services*" (Turow 2009, 593). With advertising one aims to create an image of the product or service that one wants the audience to perceive; it does not necessarily reflect the opinion of a person utilizing that product or service.

Due to its often quite high costs, advertising tends to be available mostly for more established artists, or those signed with a bigger label. As discussed in the previous chapter, people need to be exposed to a message repeatedly in order to remember it. When thinking about supporting promotion with paid advertising, it needs to be established if the budget is suitable for repetitive advertising to the same target group. If it is not, then the strategy should be revised. There is for example hardly any point in forking out a high sum for TV advertising if the budget allows only one time slot. Distributing the budget to a series of print or online ads instead might prove to be a more efficient strategy.

Possible advertising channels besides print, broadcast and online media are for example the inside and outside of public transport vehicles, bus or tram stops, taxis, outside walls of buildings, inside big buildings that attract many people, such as shopping centres, stations or sports arenas, advertising pillars, hot air balloons and street banners. The possibilities may seem endless, but so are the costs.

Last but not least, one of the extremely effective music promotion components is **publicity**. Publicity is defined as "*the process of getting people or products mentioned in the news and entertainment media in order to get members of the public interested in them*" (Turow 2009, 625). Publicity is all about artist representatives connecting with the right people in the various media outlets in order to convince them to provide media visibility for the artists. Media coverage, e.g. in the form of news reports, previews and



reviews of albums and live performances, stories, interviews and airplay, increases not only the public awareness about an artist or their work, but can also show to other gatekeepers within the music industry that the artist's music is worth listening to (King 2009, 127). Publicity can be regarded as 'free advertising', but due to its objective nature it is way more credible, thus more influential, than paid advertising. There are different opinions about the quality of publicity; while some strive for positive publicity only, others seem to be in the opinion that any publicity is 'good'. One can surely argue about the reasonability of the latter, but it is of course absolutely conceivable that even a bad album review may get readers' attention and place the artist's name in their heads.

### **3.4 Promoting to the Media**

The main concern when promoting to the media is to get publicity for the artist. The principle of promotion is fairly simple: if gatekeepers can be impressed, they will readily inform their audience about the artist and the music and endorse it. However, not everything that gets a lot of media attention is universally also good, and likewise not everything that is not considered worthy by the media is necessarily bad. Ahokas et al. (2004, 123) stress that media publicity can never be obtained by force; if media show no interest in an artist, then they simply are not interested. Media are usually not interested in an artist until the artist or its work has grown meaningful enough for the media's general audience.

In the competitive media landscape it is at times extremely difficult to get the attention and the interest of the media. There needs to be a good reason for the media to be interested in a particular artist, and it is important to understand that the media's main interest is not how publicity can help the artist in advancing their career, but what the media believe to be of interest to their own audience. This also means that it is up to the media how the story around an artist is built, because it will be designed to serve the media's audience, not the artist's image (Ahokas et al. 2004, 130).

### 3.4.1 The Promotion People

Normally it is either the record company's marketing team or the artist management who will take care of marketing their signed artists and approaching the media for publicity. Exceptions to this rule are unsigned artists or artists that are working with independent freelance promoters. Finland is a small country where a lot of people connected to the music and media industries know each other, so in case of Finnish artists it is not uncommon that an artist and a journalist agree directly with each other on some things, e.g. arranging an interview, without even getting the promotion staff involved.

In the case of international artists that are not signed to one of the four major labels, local distributors usually take care of marketing the artist rosters of the indie labels they distribute in their respective territory. It is the labels that allocate promotional materials and budgets to the local distributors. The market size of the distribution region plays a big role for the allocation of budgets, and as a result of this Finnish distribution companies usually do not find themselves anywhere near the top of the labels' priority lists in that respect.

Naturally any marketing professional should absolutely stand behind the product they are promoting, but in practice this is often not possible. While personal preferences to a may be considered to a small extent, it is usually unlikely for record company employees to personally choose who they want to promote and who not. The record company's entire artist roster needs promotion and with a limited number of marketing staff available, it is sadly often so that record company promoters may end up with artists they cannot really relate to, or with more artists than they would normally have time for. Freelance promoters are in a better position in that sense, because they do not have to follow predetermined artist rosters, but can choose their artists rather freely. However, in order to earn their living, also freelance promoters may decide to take on other projects, by which they were initially unimpressed. Consequently, a professional attitude and ability to deliver good results under any circumstances is highly important.

### 3.4.2 The Promotion Tools

There are certain tools the promotion professional should have in order to approach media for publicity. These tools are needed to be able to effectively select target media and present to them what is on offer, with the objective to awaken their interest.

The basis of good promotion work is to maintain a proper *media contact database*. It is not enough to have a name, publication and an email address. It is of course a point to start with, but it is most important to know who the players in the media are and track down the exactly right person to approach for each particular promotion project. Therefore the contact database should also contain information about a journalist's personal preferences, which can be obtained by researching the journalist's writing, from previous contacts and experiences, and of course also by simply asking the journalist about the kind of artists and music he/she is interested in and what kind of format he/she prefers for promos<sup>9</sup>.

For every promotion project there should be a *promotion plan*, which contains the basic information of the release, a short overview of the current situation, budget information and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) objectives for the project. The plan should also contain the media strategy for promotion and possibly advertising as well as the desired media exposure in each phase.

The most essential presentation tool to the media is a *press kit*. The press kit is the artist's 'business card' and needs to be professional, well maintained, complete, easy to use and able to create attention. Contents of the press kit are artist's biography, promotional photos and the artist's logo (both need to be serviced digitally), product fact sheet and, in launch promotion, also a review copy of the product. Optional extras are a summary of current press clippings, e.g. articles or reviews (if the product was released elsewhere before) and video clips on a DVD.

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<sup>9</sup> Promo: promotional copy of an album or single, that is distributed free to media professionals and DJs before the official release. Many times those copies are distributed without the accompanying artwork and are numbered and watermarked to prevent leaking. Some labels also give sales copies as promo copies, often with the barcode made unreadable to prevent resale. With advancing technologies, the distribution of audio files is often also done through professional online tools. (Wikipedia)

In the digital age the traditional printed press kit is more and more replaced by the *Electronic Press Kit (EPK)*, which mostly is submitted on a storage medium or downloadable from a web link. Attaching an entire EPK to an email depends on its size and is not recommended, unless this form of submission has been agreed beforehand. If submitted by email, audio and video clips should be made available as direct links. Photos that are attached to an email should be in low resolution, and a link should be provided to download the photo in high resolution. Even if the downloadable EPK contains music files or if a link is provided to download them, the physical product should still follow in the post for those media representatives that prefer ‘the real thing’. The product’s quality will speak for itself, and unquestionably the product itself should be provided to the media at no cost.

Music media representatives are effectively a consumer group of their own, even though they do not (or should not) need to actually buy the product. Some journalists prefer digital promos or access to label iPools<sup>10</sup> as a fast and easy way to access new music. Others again value the presence of a physical product more as they will feel more attracted to the experience of the CD as a physical medium. As the music companies need and want to have media on board as gatekeepers, it is important that individual preferences are considered, and that also promo material is generally made available in both digital and physical formats.

A good example for making the promo experience more valuable for the consumer group of music media representatives was the release of *Placebo*’s sixth studio album ‘Battle For The Sun’ in June 2009. In addition to a limited amount of pre-promotion watermarked discs, the band’s record label PIAS allocated a number of the limited CD+DVD version (BATTLE09CDX) of the album to key media, which came presented in a lavish case bound book style packaging and contained, besides the 13-track CD album, a bonus DVD featuring a 40-minute documentary about the making of the album and exclusive interviews with the band. This delivered some interesting background information to the journalists, which they could use for articles or as a base for further interviews, and the notion of receiving a special package might have also helped to get the attention of more journalists, leaving them with the feeling of being valued.

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<sup>10</sup> iPool: web-based software used by a number of record labels for digital promo distribution.

When sending the press kit to selected key media, it will be accompanied by a ***cover letter***, or these days more often by email. There are of course also situations when a cover letter, or pitch letter, is sent without the press kit. The letter should be personalized for the target media, and in the case of electronic promotion only be sent to one recipient at a time. This might take a bit more effort, but the person on the receiving end will certainly value a more personal approach instead of yet another mass mailing. Especially in electronic form this letter is what needs to grab the media's attention – a great EPK will not help if the actual email ends up unread in the trash bin. This starts with the subject line, which should give a brief summary of the message content and attract the recipient's attention (Lathrop 2003, 165).

For the actual message one needs to think clearly about what should be said, to whom it is said, why it is said and how it will be said. The key is to find out what could make the artist interesting especially for the audience of the targeted media and then present the case from that angle. The message could suggest ideas for a potential story, give a reason why the media's audience would be interested and offer something special besides the basic information. As one of the respondents of the Media Survey (2010) noted, “*releasing an album isn't news*”. Other appropriate facts to mention are for example the artist's promotional schedule, appearances that are relevant for the selected media or any innovative publicity plans. The writing style should be professional and well-mannered, and overall the message needs to be kept short and be presented in a clear and visually attractive, but not overloaded, layout with the main points highlighted.

A ***press release*** serves as the main news communication tool to the media, as it is designed to keep media up-to-date about any product news, upcoming events or other special news. The press release ought to be kept short, informative, objective and interesting to the media's audience. Usually it is marked with the sentence ‘For immediate release’ and the date, so media know that the information can and should be made public. However, the decision if and what information from the press release will be published or used for an article is down to the discretion of the receiver. A press release should always contain the senders name and contact information, in case media have further questions about the sent information.

### 3.4.3 The Promotion Process

According to Alanko (in Haaranen 2005, 78)<sup>11</sup> and Palovaara (2010) there is no single universal formula that could be applied to every music promotion project, because every case is different. However, the first important step is always to learn all about the product; that is listening to the music and researching the artist, if one is not familiar with them yet, in order to understand both the product's selling points and the artist's idea about publicity. It also needs to be established who is the target audience; the people that are likely to buy the music product. Kivisilta (in Haaranen 2005, 80)<sup>12</sup> explains that in music promotion the target audience segments are usually defined based on the consumers' life styles rather than age.

Defining the target audience serves as basis for the selection of the appropriate promotion channels. A good music promoter knows the content of each individual media, because there is no point in trying to get visibility in a media to which the artist and the music absolutely does not relate to. It is also necessary to find out everything about the media peoples' preferences, so one can target exactly the right people when presenting a particular product. Ahokas et al. (2004, 129) explain that in terms of media visibility not only the quantity but also the quality matters. For the product presentation the promoter needs to select the media that is considered to be most important and suitable for the music style and the artist's beliefs, and put strong efforts into their representative's direction. Nieminen (in Haaranen 2005, 79)<sup>13</sup> summarizes that in the search for publicity options *"the promoter's job is to understand both the media's and the artists' viewpoints, and try to make them come closer"*.

It is worth noting that promotion to the media needs to be differentiated from the one that is targeted to the end consumers or retail. Media need facts to enable them to work with the artist and their representatives, so they can communicate the information to their audience. They do not need to be 'sold' something. When planning on how to approach the media, a music promoter should consider what kind of article could be of

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<sup>11</sup> Original source: Alanko, Marko. Brand Manager / Sony BMG Music Entertainment Oy. Interview 7.7.2005

<sup>12</sup> Original source: Kivisilta, Kimmo. Marketing Director / Universal Music Oy. Interview 9.6.2005

<sup>13</sup> Original source: Nieminen, Pekka. Marketing Manager / Helsinki Music Company Ltd. Interview 21.6.2005

interest to the media professional and his/her audience and suggest this (Lathrop 2003, 139). Depending on the target media's profile and content, there are also different angles that can be applied in order to provoke media interest. Besides the music, interest can also be created through visual appearance, presentation of artistic qualities as well as through a background story (Haaranen 2005, 78).

Ahokas et al. (2004, 128) stress that whatever message is communicated to the media must be based on the truth. While big words and fakes might work in rather superficial market environments such as the USA, these kinds of things will not stand any ground in Finland. Nieminen (in Haaranen 2005, 86)<sup>14</sup> confirms from experience that Finns want to read true stories. He names as an example the Finnish girl band *PMMP*, who, at the beginning of their career, lied about their age in a fact file at one of the big Finnish evening newspapers. When the lie became obvious, the paper's editor-in-chief felt insulted and contacted the record company "*claiming that the girls were questioning the status of the publication as a credible news medium*" (Haaranen 2005, 87).

Lathrop (2003, 150) reminds us that the approach of media depends largely on the status of the artist (new on the market or already established) and the scope of the publicity (regional or national). Most often promotion starts with the radios, because an album does not sell from the shelf just because it looks nice; for people to be excited about the music they first need to hear it. Once one radio station starts playing a song regularly or adds it to their playlist, most likely the 'snowball effect' will kick in and others will follow.

From the radio, demand can build up to other publicity outlets and possible interrelationships between media outlets should be taken into account. For example, if Ilkka Mattila (music editor for *Helsingin Sanomat* and *Nyt*) (Tammi) or Otto Talvio (freelance music writer, a.o. for *Nyt* and *Rumba*) (Teos) write about or praise an artist, the artist will most certainly also get airplay on 'in' station *Radio Helsinki*.

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<sup>14</sup> Original source: Nieminen, Pekka. Marketing Manager / Helsinki Music Company Ltd. Interview 21.6.2005

To consider is also the timing of the approach for the best impact, whereby the respective media outlets' production times and submission deadlines need to be kept in mind. For a new product, visibility should concentrate on the time before the release, so that by release date most of the target audience already know about it and expectations and desire have had time to built up. Pre-release publicity can be single airplay and video play, previews, stories, interviews and also exclusives, such as promoting the new release as 'album of the week' on radios that offer this feature, like *YleX* and *NRJ*. During the product release, promotional activities must be tight as well, e.g. with visits and live performances at radio and TV and competitions ran through media outlets. Media can of course also be invited to observe fan-interacting promotional activities such as in-store performances and signing sessions in connection with a new release.

Also in tour promotion media visibility needs to be obtained before the event, because naturally it is necessary for the audience to know about a concert in their area before it takes place. Media people should actively be invited to the shows. Firstly, this provides possibility for the media to go and see the combination of product and service, namely the artist performing their music. It is also an opportunity for the artist to convince the media about their artistic qualities. Kivisilta (in Haaranen 2005, 78)<sup>15</sup> names one of the by now well-established Finnish rock acts, *Uniklubi*, as an example. In the beginning of the band's career, radios initially refused to play their music until some people from *YleX* and *NRJ* saw them performing live and realized the band's talent. As promotion staff regularly are (or ought to be) present at the artist's performances, inviting media representatives to a gig can also be regarded as a good opportunity for keeping in touch with each other and building good relationships.

Once media has shown interest and interviews are scheduled, the promoter as well as the artist's management need to make sure that the artist is well prepared for the interviews; they need to be sure about their purpose and goals and know exactly what they are talking about, and what not to talk about.

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<sup>15</sup> Original source: Kivisilta, Kimmo. Marketing Director / Universal Music Oy. Interview 9.6.2005



The promoter's task is also to read and follow up on actual coverage and report any progress, achievements and feedback to the heads of marketing and promotion as well as to the artist and their management. They should also communicate feedback on the media coverage and express their gratitude to the media partners, especially if they feel that a great job was done.

***Example 'to-do list' for promotion to media***

- Product familiarity: get familiar with the music and the artist (in case of new artist) so you know what you are promoting.
- Define target audience and establish a promotion plan.
- Preparing the presentation: write/update biography, create product fact sheet, collect assets for press kit (photos, review copies, goodies, press clippings).
- Select appropriate media for publicity, think about the angles of presentation and write personalized cover letter. Invite to live performances, if possible.
- Send press kit and follow up with phone call.
- Give word of mouth a little time to build.
- Schedule and coordinate promotional activities, e.g. media interviews, appearances, competitions. Accompany artist on their promo visits, if possible.
- Regular promo reports (scheduled activities, progress, review results etc.) to label management and artist management.
- Collect whatever of the media coverage can be collected (clippings, links, interviews, recordings etc.) and thank media partners for good work.
- Create promo sheet with selected media comments from the local territory; this can be used as promotional tool for wholesalers and retailers.

### **3.4.4 Media Relations and Networking**

The music industry often appears an impenetrable business. Who you know and who knows you are probably the most important success factors. The main asset of a music promoter is to have a strong professional network and maintain good relationships with the right media professionals. Identifying influential key people and gatekeepers can greatly increase the chances of getting a message across to the media.



Professional networking does not only comprise of direct connections with someone, but also keeping in mind the connections they have, from which others could benefit (Figure 9). Professional networks should work both ways, so that everyone involved is able to get the most out of the network. Thinking of the other party's needs when communicating and planning activities helps a great deal in making the relationship mutually beneficial.

**Figure 9: Networking** (Image: Vicsport)

For maintaining one's network it is essential to keep in touch with each other, both virtually as well as face-to-face, whenever possible. Technology has made it easy to keep in touch at least virtually, as distance does not matter anymore. Staying in touch is important also in times when there is nothing new to convey. As discussed in the previous chapter, actively inviting media people to live performances is a pleasant way to keep in touch, with the added bonus of getting the artist heard and seen. Industry gatherings, conventions, festivals and showcases are other key options to stay in contact with industry and media partners, and they furthermore provide the opportunity to extend one's personal network by making new contacts with representatives of global music and media organizations.

In the music business it is often the promoter who keeps contact with the media in order to obtain publicity for an artists, but in some cases it can also be the media who take the initiative by asking for access to the artist, for example when popular international artists visit a certain territory or area and media demand for that particular artist is very high. Helping others whenever possible might motivate them to be of help to oneself in a later situation. Good manners, a friendly tone towards each other, as well as simply saying 'thank you' for a good job are common sense actions, which will also help to develop and strengthen a relationship.

In most promotion projects, a rejection situation will unavoidably arise at some point. There are many factors that play a role in the media's decision; a negative answer will not always mean that the product is bad. Coverage often may depend on issues like competing stories, space restrictions in the medium, or simply the media not sensing enough demand from their audience yet. It is important to be able to accept a 'no' and to not take it as a personal rejection. Continued work on building a following, trying to get publicity elsewhere and letting word of mouth build the excitement about an artist might still lead to rising interest at a later stage (Lathrop 2003, 181).

One issue to note from observations is that the media often tend to not give any responses at all. This is a frustrating situation for the promoter, as it is hard for them to know if the media person has even received the sent information and press kit or if there has been a chance to have a look at it. Acknowledging the receipt of a promo package or other kinds of requests and more importantly giving straight feedback even if there is no interest would help the promoter to better evaluate the situation and also save both parties time and efforts.

## 4 DISCUSSION OF SURVEY AND INTERVIEWS

### 4.1 Analysis and Discussion of the Media Survey

#### 4.1.1 The Media Survey

An invitation to take the online survey was sent to 145 Finnish media contacts. The journalists were selected from the contacts database gathered during the internship at Supersounds Music, which contains a number of Finland's key media contacts. The selected journalists are either working for media that is entirely dedicated to music and entertainment, or they are involved in content creation of the culture sections of general media.

The survey was carried out using the Internet based tool Survey Gizmo, which enables a smooth construction, conduction and analysis of a survey. Data was analyzed mainly through the survey's reporting tool, but data was also transferred to Excel in order to create own graphs and charts to visualize results.

The survey was online for three months from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010 until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010. The journalists received an email invitation with information about the purpose of the survey and the link to the online location on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010, and a reminder was sent on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010. The main reason for keeping the survey open for this long was that it fell into the season of summer holidays and summer festivals, during which time a lot of the invitees were either away or extremely busy.

The responses were collected anonymously; the respondents had to neither give their name nor the name of the media they represent. However, they were given the option to add this information in the 'Comments' field if they wished to do so. This option was only used by one person.

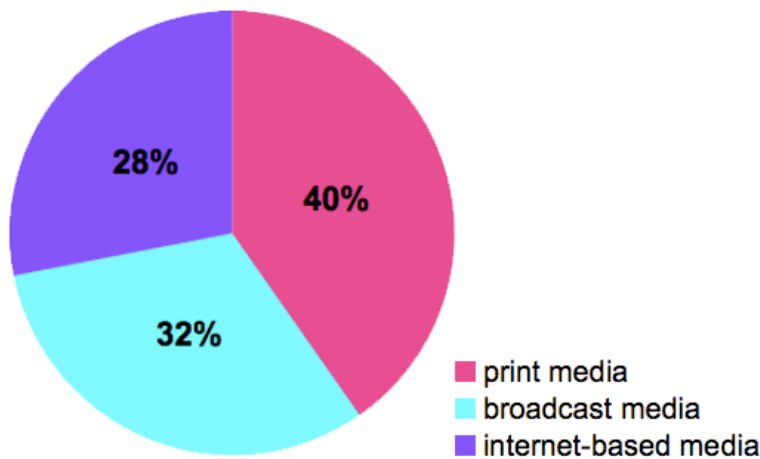
The questions were asked in both, English and Finnish, as at least some of the invited journalists were expected to have no or a very low command of the English language or to not feel comfortable enough to use English in their responses. The intention of a survey in two languages was to make it as convenient as possible for the journalists to respond, thus increasing the chances for a number of responses. The invitees were initially given free choice in what language they wanted to answer, although they were asked to submit the answers preferably in English if it made no difference to them, as Finnish is not the thesis author's native language.

The survey consisted of three parts with questions of both quantitative and qualitative nature. In the questions the wording 'artist or artist representative' was deliberately used to be sure to include anyone connected with an artist who may approach the mass media in order to obtain publicity. The first and second part contained six closed-ended questions, all of which were required to be answered. Some of the answer choices contained an additional comments field for explanation or reasoning of the choice. The questions of the first part were designed to obtain demographic information about the type of the respondent's media, while the questions of the second part were concerned with factors of importance in the journalists' decision-making process as well as their ways of keeping up-to-date about new music and trends. The third part contained three open-ended questions and an additional field for other comments. Those questions were partly required and partly optional. The journalists were asked what can trigger or possibly even prevent their interest in an artist and to give their opinions about the relationship between media and artists and their representatives and its possible improvability. All survey questions are attached in Appendix C.

In order to be able to collect a good sample, the goal was to have at least 30 responses. Expectations were exceeded, as a total of 78 persons took the survey, out of which 21 abandoned without filling in all of the required information. The responses that are taken into consideration for the sample are those 57 that had completed at minimum the closed-ended questions and submitted the survey.

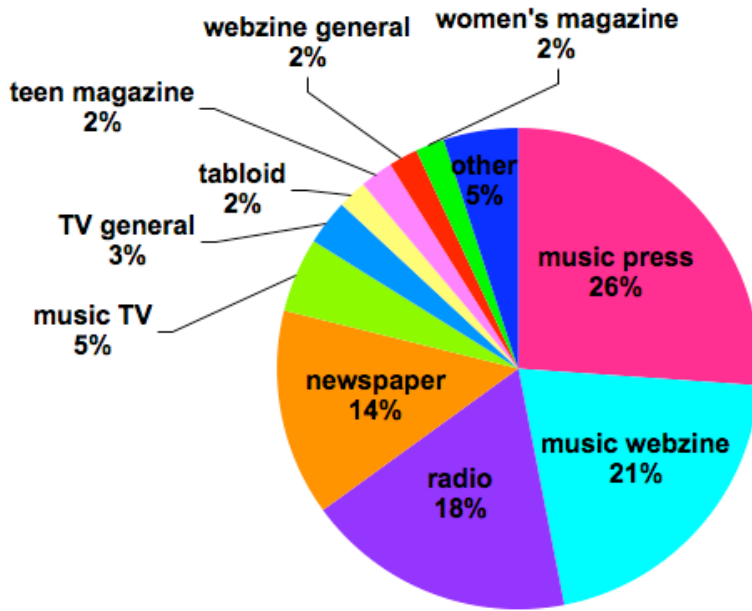
## 4.2.2 Survey Demographics

The first three questions of the survey aimed at finding out what type of media the respondents represent and the music genres they cover. The 57 respondents were relatively evenly distributed from across the three main media sectors. 40% of the responses came from journalists, whose main operational field is in print media, 32% from broadcast media (radio and TV) and 28% from internet-based media (Figure 10). It is to note that the respondents were able to choose only one media sector and were asked to select the one that stands for the main element of the media they represent. These days many media companies operate through more than one of these basic channels; i.e. the majority of print and broadcast media also publish content on their own websites.



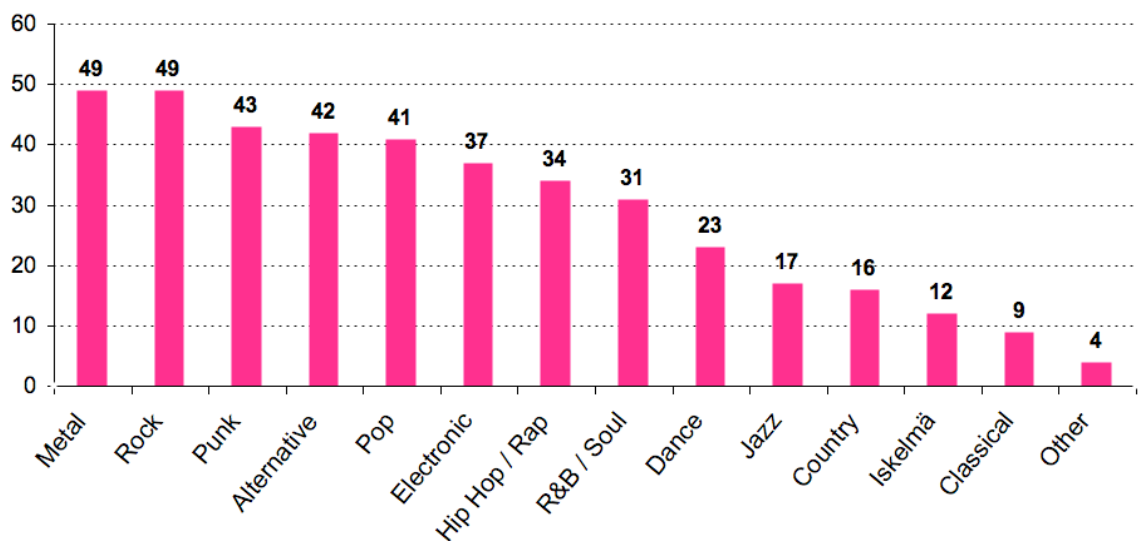
*Figure 10: Respondents by Media Sector (Media Survey 2010)*

The media representatives were then asked to specify in more detail what type of media they represent. Nearly three quarters of the responses came from representatives of media exclusively dedicated to music and entertainment (Figure 11).



**Figure 11: Respondents by Media Outlet (Media Survey 2010)**

The respondents were also asked to select the music genres that are covered in their media in order to get a better overview over the respondents' areas of activity and interest (Figure 12). The selection of genres was hereby unlimited.



**Figure 12: Genres Covered by Respondents' Media (Media Survey 2010)**

### 4.2.3 Survey Results

In question 4 the respondents were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (*absolutely unimportant*) to 5 (*extremely important*), how important they consider five pre-selected factors when deciding on coverage in their media. The given factors were selected based on assumptions and observations made during the author’s internship as promotion assistant and presumed that the genre of the artist in question fits the media’s genre spectrum.

60% of the respondents rated their own personal taste an important factor when selecting artists that are to be covered in the media. 41% of the respondents considered it important that the request for media coverage was sent by a person from within their closer professional network; in other words by someone they have already worked with before. 30% of the respondents found that other media’s interest in a particular artist might also trigger their interest. Artist’s origin and the record label that stands behind the artist were not considered majorly important factors (Figure 13).

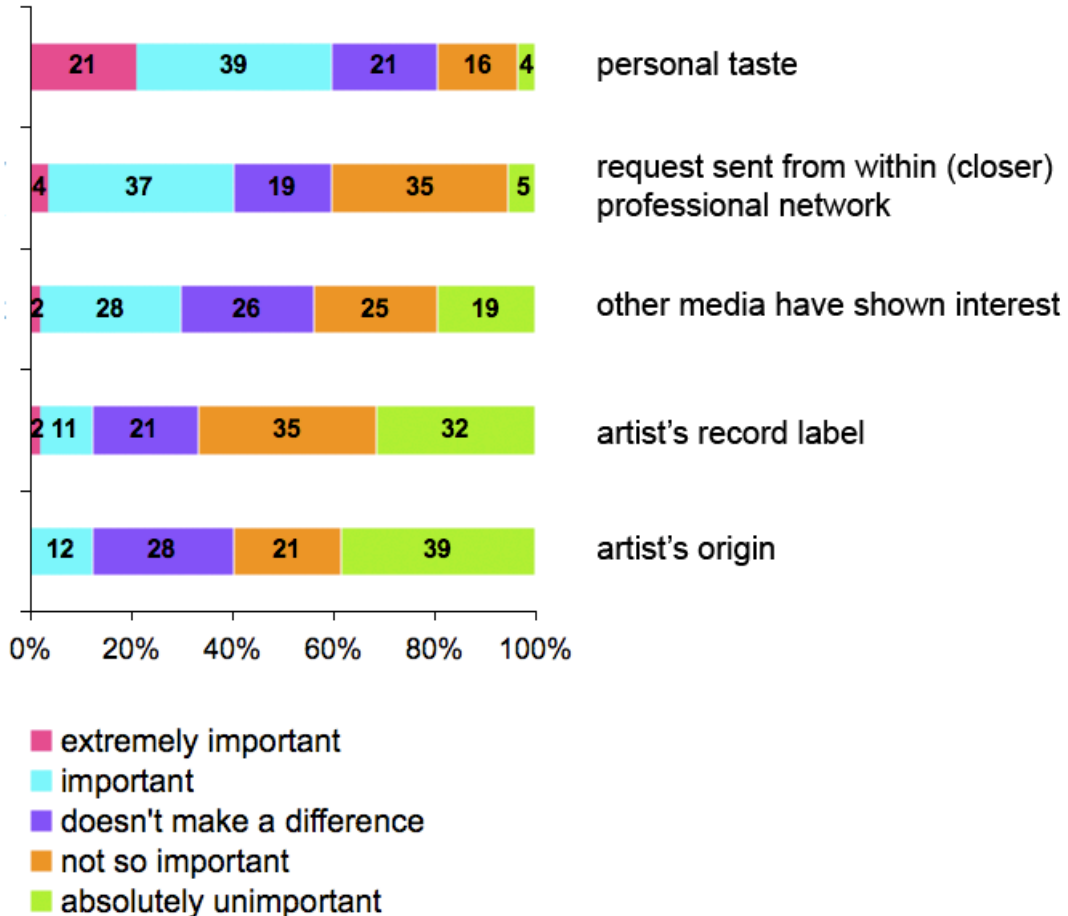
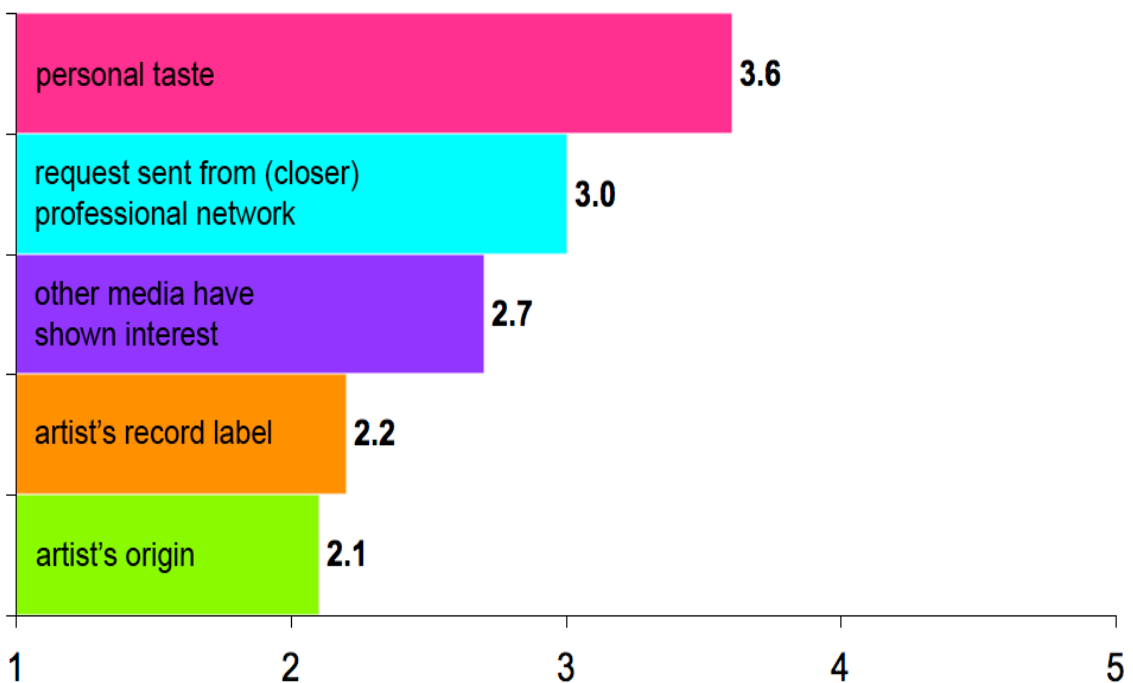


Figure 13: Decision Factors for Media Coverage; Importance (Media Survey 2010)



Based on the received responses, the average importance of the given factors could be established (Figure 14). The applied rating scale was from 1 (*absolutely unimportant*) to 5 (*extremely important*). Also the average rating confirms that personal taste plays the most important role in the selection process. Coverage requests sent from artist representatives that belong to the journalist’s closer network and the fact that other media have shown interest in an artist are on an average rating considered to not have a huge impact on the decision. Again, origin of the artist as well as the label they are on are averagely not classified as very important factors when selecting an artist for coverage in the media.

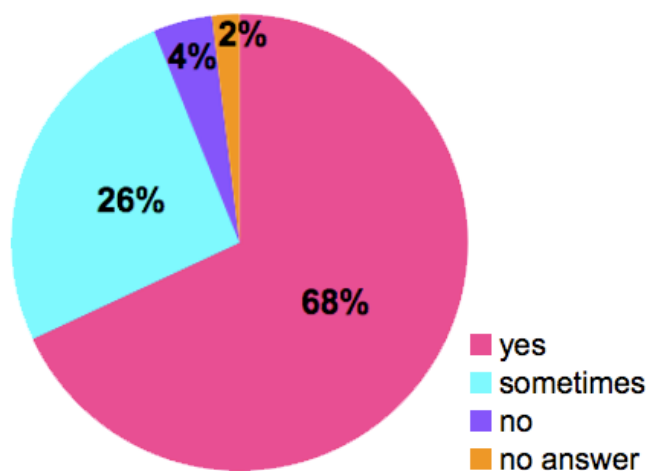


**Figure 14: Decision Factors for Media Coverage; Average Ratings**  
(Media Survey 2010)

After analyzing the survey responses as a whole, one major flaw was detected in terms of the pre-selection of the factors. While ‘what could interest the media’s audience’ appears to be an almost self-evident factor, it should have been included in the rating, in which it would have been likely to appear as the most important factor of all. As one of the respondents critically noted, “*a professional doesn’t think about his/her own ‘taste’. He/she thinks about what the target group would like to read.*” (Media Survey 2010).

Those respondents that considered ‘artist’s record label’ and ‘artist’s origin’ as important, were able to give their opinion about their priorities in terms of labels (major vs. indie) and origin (domestic vs. international). Surprisingly indies seemed to be slightly in favour in the responses, but it is not possible to draw a general conclusion from this because it is apparent that this factor largely depends on the nature and audience of the media. What is more important to note from both the survey and also the media interviews, is that it is not the division major/indie that is of importance to media, but rather the profile and quality standards that are associated with a particular label. Considering that domestic artists dominate the Finnish market it is no surprise that Finnish artists were considerably in favour of those that considered the artist’s origin as important. But again, it is not possible to conclude from this that Finnish artists are given priority in general, as nature and audience of the media influence this factor as well.

Question 5 asked the media representatives, if – in case the artist did not correspond with their personal taste – they would pass on a request for media coverage or a promo kit internally to someone who might be more interested (Figure 15).

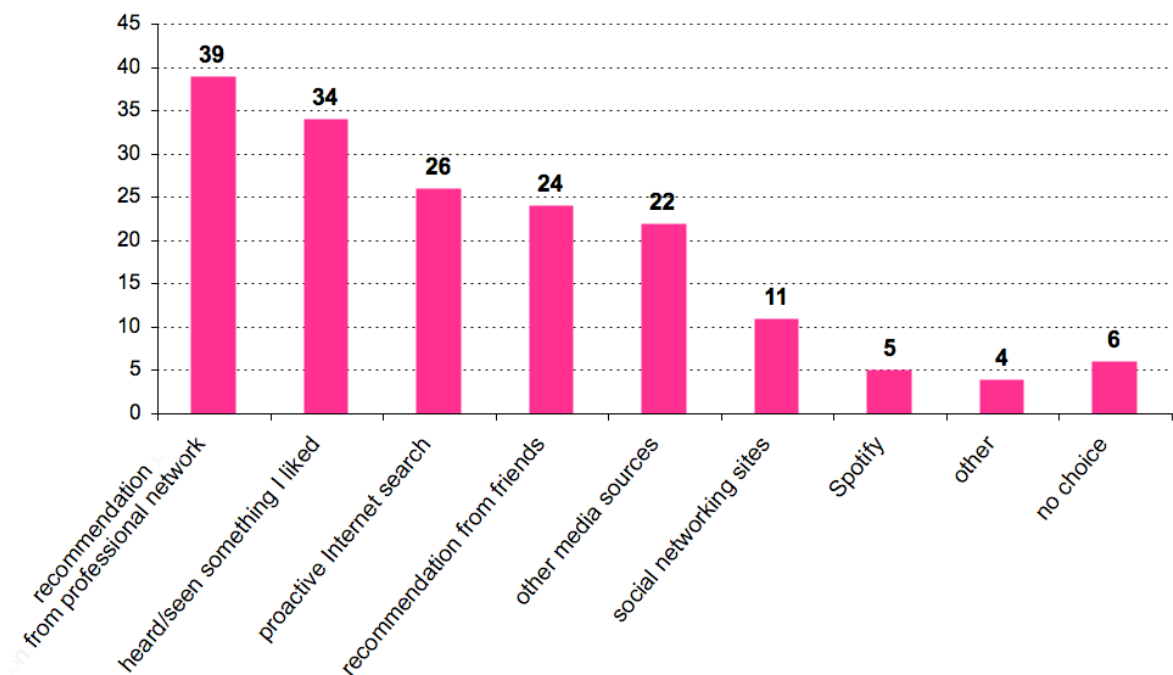


**Figure 15: Internal Distribution of Media Coverage Requests and Promo CDs (Media Survey 2010)**

Two thirds of the respondents do or would do this if the situation arises. A quarter of the respondents sometimes do. Reasons given for this restrictive decision are for example knowing for sure that someone else would like it, that it generally fits within the

media's genre spectrum and that the music and presentation are still good enough to be of interest to the media's audience. The general opinion is that most of the time there are too many requests coming in, so that it is impossible to handle and correctly place them all. This proves that such situations could be reduced by the promoter's extensive research about media people's preferences and thoughtful pre-selection of the person to be contacted. The reason for those stating 'no' as their answer was that they are working as freelancers and therefore do not necessarily have anyone to pass on any requests or presentations.

The intention of question 6 was to find out about the respondent's habits when it comes to discovering new artists or musical trends that should be covered by media in one way or another. The respondents were asked to select their three most important sources of information out of a list of given sources (Figure 16).



**Figure 16: Top-3 Sources for Finding New Artists/Music (Media Survey 2010)**

Recommendations from the professional network as well as from friends ranked quite high in the selection. Many naturally also find out about new artists or music by just hearing or seeing something they liked, which could be for example at a music festival, or also from other media sources. The journalists appear also to be quite active to search for new music themselves on the Internet. Social networking sites or Spotify were not

selected as often. Some of the respondents explained that Spotify or MySpace are not necessarily used as primary sources as it would be an endless task to actively surf around different artist profiles in order to find new music, but that such profiles are rather considered as tools for checking on artists that they have previously heard or read about.

One of the other sources mentioned was a media's own discussion forum, to which artists fitting in the covered genre can announce their existence, and the media might pick up on possible excitement from the readers. Another point concerned a particular media's own music policy, which comprised of listening to a lot of new music but defining themselves what is interesting. Another of the respondents noted that while it was possible to accidentally stumble across a new artist at a festival, it would not usually serve as a place for intentionally discovering new artists. The respondent stated that the main reason for attending festivals is seeing established and appreciated artists. From the media's point of view this statement can certainly be agreed with, as journalists and photographers often have a very busy schedule at festivals and with multiple stages and overlapping performance times they need to prioritize the main artists for their coverage, hence they might not be able to pay closer attention to each of the lesser-known performers. From the audience's point of view, however, this statement might be disputed.

#### **4.2.4 Survey Comments**

Questions 7, 8 and 9 of the survey were open-ended questions and content-wise relatively intertwined. Question 7 dealt with the triggers for media representatives' interest in an artist as well as anything that might put them off. The purpose was to obtain insight into what the music media are looking for most in order to do their jobs and what issues can influence their decision-making process. Question 8 aimed at establishing how, from the media's point of view, the artist's presentations could be improved in order to break through the noise and maximize chances for media coverage. The purpose of question 9 was to find out what could be done to improve the cooperation between media and artist representatives and to build good relationships.

In retrospect it can be said that the questions could have perhaps been formulated a little differently in order to achieve a clearer distinction, and questions 7 and 8 could have potentially been combined into one question. At times the respondents repeated some points they had mentioned before or referred to their answer to previous questions. While this might have appeared to some extent repetitive to the respondents and made analyzing the responses slightly less straightforward, it still had a positive effect in the sense that the answers were generally more extensive and the repetition of some of the mentioned points validated their importance to the respondent. A selection of comments that appeared most valid will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

### *Interesting – yes or no?*

Based on the received responses, the following factors could be established that can influence the media's perception of the contact, and respectively their decision about coverage, either positively or negatively. (All quotes: Media Survey 2010)



Almost all of the respondents mentioned **a good song** as the most important during the survey. That's a pretty obvious fact, and the vast selection of received comments speaks for itself:

*"Good song is the most important."<sup>16</sup>*

*"It's the music that counts."<sup>17</sup>*

*"The music itself is often more interesting than the artist self."<sup>18</sup>*

*"As far as I'm concerned the music itself speaks louder than any publicist's words."*

*"It's all about the music and songs."*

*"It's always about the music."*

*"The music is central."*

*"First and foremost the music matters and everything else comes after that."*

*"It's simple: good music is good music."*

*"The most important thing is that the music sounds good."*

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<sup>16</sup> Original Finnish text: "Hyvä biisi on tärkein."

<sup>17</sup> Original Finnish text: "Musiikki ratkaisee."

<sup>18</sup> Original Finnish text: "Musiikki itsessään on useimmiten kiinnostavampaa kuin itse artisti."

*"It's all about the music... It's always the number one thing here."*

*"There is no denying that the promo material creates interest but it's the music that's still the crucial thing."*

*"A good song it all it takes. That's the best trigger you can have – the only one you need, really. If an artist thinks his/her album will get media coverage depending solely on the actions of their record company, they are wrong. A record company cannot start a fire; that's the artist's job. A promoter can only make the flame bigger."*

Thus the promoter's key role is to make sure that the music is actually listened to in the first place. The precondition for this is to ensure that the entire **promo package** is **in order**; it needs to be complete and presented in a professional manner. The **information** that comes with the promo package needs to be **clear, precise** and limited to what is **essential** for the media to know, in order to position the music to the right place. **Highlighting important facts** makes it easier to digest. **Direct links** to audio samples, videos and live recordings *"tell in any case a lot more than a press release"*<sup>19</sup>. Regardless of having digital sound files available, a physical CD for promotional purposes is still preferred by most of the respondents, and should be sent to at least those media representatives who wish to receive one.

**Accurate targeting** of the message to the right media outlets that the artist is suitable for is crucial, as is to remember that *"not all the information of all the artists needs to go into distribution"*<sup>20</sup>. This includes a **personalized approach** at an angle that shows the importance of the artist specifically for the media's audience, which will also strengthen the message as one that is exclusively targeted at the recipient.

*"It works best, if the promoter calls or mails me and that his message is accurately targeted: 'This would be really good exactly for you because...' This conveys the feeling that it is not only an attempt to get some random artist through, but that it has been thought through, why our publication should write about the artist."*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Original Finnish text: "– – kertoo kuitenkin enemmän kuin tiedote."

<sup>20</sup> Original Finnish text: "Ei kaikkea informaatiota kaikista artisteista jakeluun."

<sup>21</sup> Original Finnish text: "Parhaiten toimii se, että promoaja soittaa tai meilaa ja kohdentaa viestinsä tarkasti: 'Tämä olisi tosi hyvä juuri teille, koska...' Silloin tulee olo, että ei vain yritetä saada jotain random-artistia läpi vaan on mietitty, miksi meidän lehden kannattaisi kirjoittaa tyypistä."

The style in which the information is presented about the artist is also vital. Said one of the respondents:

*“At least you need to sound frank, honest and inspiring in your promotional materials. Don’t make it taste like paper. Make it taste like music. But don’t overdo it.”*

In this sense it helps of course if the artist itself differs from the rest in their message and their visual image. Original presentation, good visuals and an interesting hook are additional plus points. But attention needs to be paid that in all this **originality** the actual information does not get lost.

*“Interesting is what you can’t hear from anywhere else”<sup>22</sup>* – offering something with ‘**exclusive** rights’ can also help to spark interest. Vast and widespread media coverage may even be perceived negatively sometimes as there is no demand for the same news to be covered everywhere.

Possibilities to see the artist live seem always welcome, so **invitations to live shows** or other events in the area, such as release parties, are not only a good way for keeping the media happy, but also for exploiting the possibilities by getting the artist heard and showing off the artist’s talent and fan base. On this topic it has to be mentioned though, that media should also take responsibility to inform the artist representative if they are not able to attend a show, so that the limited guest list places can be allocated in another way.

**Actuality** can often be a trigger to spark interest, for example when an artist comes to the area to perform live or has a new album on the go. Those are the occasions when media is usually approached for publicity, but it is vital to remember that *“releasing an album isn’t news”*.

**Previously good experiences** with a particular company and **trust in** their **quality** can make media more open towards the artists this company presents. If record companies have a good reputation for quality and have previously shown good taste in their artist

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<sup>22</sup> Original Finnish text: “Kiinnostavaa on se mitä muualta ei kuule.”

selections, media is more likely to take a closer look at the presented artist. One respondent also pointed out that *"in our professional network we act as so called 'shit-filters' to each other; in other words, I trust the music tastes of certain friends of mine so much that I usually become interested in the artists they recommend."*<sup>23</sup>



As off-putting factors media considers naturally **bad music** as well as **unprofessional promo packages**. Extensive text with plenty of irrelevant information, unprofessional photos, an incomplete info package or **badly made and outdated websites** will not help boosting the artist's profile. As one of the respondents stated:

*"In about half of the cases, the non-musical part of the promotional material is so badly made, that the music has no chance to be heard."*<sup>24</sup>

**Excessive self-praise** and empty **über-words** in promotional material as well as in the cover letter ought to be avoided. One of the respondents noted:

*"The traditional use of superlatives and self praise does not attract, although it doesn't cause rejection either. Quite amusing though that every other band is the 'new, rising superstar' or 'louder than Slayer' etc."*<sup>25</sup>

Media may also get suspicious if they get the feeling that someone is trying to sell them a **story instead of music**. A story can be regarded as an additional way to create interest but cannot cover up a bad core product. Said one of the respondents:

*"Do they have to have a hot story because the music isn't really that good? Stories are great, but you can't make a camouflage out of them, if the music sucks."*

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<sup>23</sup> Original Finnish text: "Ammatillisessa verkostossa toimimme ns. paskasiivilöinä toisellemme, eli luotan määrättyjen ystäväni musiikkimakuun niin paljon, että yleensä kiinnostun heidän suosittelemistaan artisteista."

<sup>24</sup> Original Finnish text: "Noin puolessa tapauksista promotiomateriaalin ei-musiikillinen osuus on hoidettu niin ala-arvoisesti, ettei musiikilla ole mitään mahdollisuuksia tulla kuulluksi."

<sup>25</sup> Original Finnish text: "Perinteinen superlatiivien käyttö ja omakehu ei houkuta, joskaan ei saa hyljeksimäänkään. Huvittavaa, että joka toinen bändi on 'uusi, nouseva superstara' tai 'kovempi kuin Slayer' tms."



**Spam-like mails** and **uninspiring cover letters** are not congenial to catching the media's interest either. An example given by one of the respondents:

*“The standard promo cover letter ‘We have this band and we play rock/metal and we have been together since 2007. Hopefully you like the demo/CD and come to our gig on dd.mm.yyyy’ doesn’t really boost my interest in getting to know more about the band.”<sup>26</sup>*

**Wrong targeting** is not appreciated; neither is applying any **pressure** by pushing through what other media are doing. There is no harm in using references but insisting on, and trying to dictate publicity, will be counterproductive. As one of the respondents claimed:

*“– – this line ‘YLE is playing this a lot.’ We are not YLE and that doesn’t make a difference for us. If the music is good, then it’s good. YLE plays a lot of crap too. :)”*

Some promoters can be overambitious in their goals and apply measures such as **excessive pushing, rudeness, offensiveness** and even **aggressiveness**. This will not get them anywhere either, quite on the contrary. Such behavior is disrespectful and will surely not help in building a good relationship with any media representatives. Media circles are small, and the previously mentioned ‘shit-filter’ system may be well applicable to people in the same way as it is to music.

There was also negative feedback on music that is edited in a way that ruins the song, such as **beeps, voiceovers** and **fade-outs**, which are often used to prevent public spreading of promotional material. While it is an recognized fact that leaking of unreleased music is not desirable for neither the record company nor the artist, such limitations will not aid the media in getting a full picture of the music and prevent them from doing their job properly.

**Previously bad experiences** with a company as well as the general appearance of **unprofessionalism** and **carelessness** in the promotion work may also provoke counter reactions. One of the respondents declared that *“if the artist is not serious about*

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<sup>26</sup> Original Finnish text: “Promosaate mallia ‘Meillä on tämmönen bändi ja me soitetaan rockia/metallia ja ollaan oltu koossa vuodesta 2007. Toivottavasti demo/levy maistuu ja tulkaa keikalle pp.kk.vvvv’ ei myöskään varsinaisesti tutustumishaluja tappiin saa.”

*himself, neither is our media.*” Another respondent clarified certain expectations in terms of the record company’s responsibilities:

*“If a record label’s promotion has sunk to a level, where I get a notification ‘you may go to our site and download material from there’; that music does not exist for me. In my opinion it’s just outsourcing someone else’s job to me, and I don’t see a reason why I should waste my own time to do that.”*

To note is also, that the ‘pay to play’ principle cannot be applied to media. **Trying to buy publicity**, in other words buying advertising space in exchange for extra publicity, may be an option elsewhere, but it definitely will not work with Finnish media. As Heta Hyttinen from Rytmi magazine said in one of the media interviews: *“In Finnish music media we are proud of what we do. And we are not buyable.”* (Hyttinen 2010)

#### ***How can presentations to the media be improved?***

Based on the received comments, some issues could be identified that, depending on individual circumstances, might need some improvement in terms of presentation to the media. (All quotes: Media Survey 2010)

**Targeting** is perceived as important and promoters need to **improve** their research on who is who and ask questions to find out media people’s preferences. This will enable them to better select who to send promotional material to, as they can pick exactly the right people for whom the particular information is of the highest value. One respondent pointed out that *“the best promo people act on instinct and the knowledge that they know who they are giving the CD to”*. When selecting media, they should also keep in mind not only the quantity of exposure but also the quality. Another respondent highlighted that there is also *“a responsibility from the music press to get the writers to cover the music they love and not just any genre.”*

The availability of **music in different formats** and **timely distribution** of the promotional material was mentioned often as well. Most of the media representatives seem to still prefer physical CDs as a whole product, although some find the digital formats easier and faster. While it certainly is convenient to have mp3 distribution, it

still does not rise to the value of a physical CD and it often “leaves a cheap and impersonal flavor”<sup>27</sup>. The same respondent reported:

*“A small foreign label that moved from distribution of mp3 promos back to physical promos summed it up nicely: ‘The bands we represent deserve better than a bit stream’.”*<sup>28</sup>

So the music should be available in different formats not only for the consumers, but also for promotional purposes and distributed to the media depending on their individual preferences. Any targeted media representative, who still values the finished CD as a whole product, should also receive one. It is a small price to pay for the record companies in exchange for publicity and good relations with the media.

One of the most important issues that was raised by a number of the respondents and that should not be left unnoted was the **music quality**. Visibility in the media should be given for a reason, and that is first and foremost good music. Aside from the fact that artists themselves must have done the basic work before seeking publicity in mass media: they must have a clear vision of what they are, what they do, why they do it and where they want to go. One of the respondents pointed out that it hurts the music industry when artists get published way before they are ready, because it creates oversupply. Another respondent brought up another critical argument concerning the oversupply of low-quality music:

*“Quite honestly – make better records! And release less music – I really think there are way too many releases these days. Artists release albums when they only have an EP’s<sup>29</sup> worth of good material.”*

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<sup>27</sup> Original Finnish text: “– jää halpa ja persoonaton sivumaku.”

<sup>28</sup> Original Finnish text: Eräs ulkomainen pieni yhtiö, joka siirtyi mp3-jakelusta takaisin fyysisiin promoihin kiteytti asian osuvasti: ‘Edustamani bändit ansaitsevat parempaa kuin bittivirta’.”

<sup>29</sup> EP: musical recording, which contains more music than a regular single, but is too short to qualify as a full album (approximately 25 minutes or 4 tracks). (Wikipedia)

There is indeed more music out there that can ever be consumed by one person, and a substantial part of this music is anything but fresh and original. Technology has progressed to a point where it has become possible for anyone with a little inspiration to make music, record it and even release it, as opposed to some 20 years ago when only those few hand-picked lucky ones could work their way to success. While it is surely not a bad thing that anyone has a fair chance to be heard, there are also downsides: the market has become oversaturated and quality is no longer ranked as high with regards to what eventually makes it to the market. A couple of decades ago, the only way to obtain music was to buy a cassette tape, LP or CD, and whatever music a consumer decided to cash out for was something he/she highly appreciated. Today it is not necessary to be so selective; besides the much-discussed illegal downloading issue, technology provides a multitude of legal ways to get acquainted with music without actually having to buy it. These changes naturally affect consuming patterns of music; the consumer now can decide between 'just having' or 'appreciating' something. The same pattern applies to the media – they can get acquainted with the music, but there is no need for them to buy (= endorse) it. This may suggest that the players in the recording industry need to redefine quality and become more selective, and, according to one of the respondents, they also need to develop a better *“understanding about how many artists/bands really are out there, and how many of them are trying to get the media coverage at the same time.”*

Media also appreciates **activity** and **apparent efforts**, both in terms of the promoter's jobs and the promotional material. The following example, given by one of the respondents, may, at least to some, appear nitpicking, but it demonstrates well how easily impressions can be created.

*“One thing that bothers me right now is the fact that record company people (from major companies) tend to send promotional materials like 3-page bios to us journalists in English. – – Although everyone here speaks English, this is still Finland, so they should do their jobs and translate the materials if they want to be sure that people read them. When I get promos in my mailbox in English, I get the feeling that the record company dude was too busy to go get his Friday beer at the terrace.”*

The need for *well-educated staff* in the music industry in general was brought up as well. One of the respondent's statements might sound a bit harsh and is likely to be questioned by many, although it indicates the importance of continuous education and keeping up-to-date on the latest developments in industry:

*“Artist representatives should be trained professionally. Many of the record company employees only have a thin educational base, if any at all.”*<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore most direct and *easy access to artists* and a *smooth flow of information* should be ensured. *Flexibility* in terms of interview conduction would be highly appreciated, although this may often be beyond the control of the person scheduling the interviews, because it largely depends on the artist themselves. On the topic of interviews two of the respondents reminded about *fair play* and shared their experiences about interviews that were refused by the promoter for the reason that the artist did not want to or did not have the time to do the interview. Later it became apparent that the artists would have been happy to do the interview but were never even asked about it in the first place.

Another point was brought up by several of the respondents that represent webzines. Professional journalists as well as record companies often label *Internet-based media* as amateurs, because the writers are usually volunteers without formal education in the field of journalism, who dedicate their free time to the job without getting paid. While it is true that there are many unprofessional webzines, there are also many good ones. Internet-based media should not be lumped together with the automatic assumption that the content quality is always bad. Content quality needs to be evaluated individually and based on this selected webzines should be treated the same way as other media in terms of promotion material and possibilities. The power of the Internet is not to be underestimated, as it can reach a large audience and the content can be stored and retrieved for an unlimited period of time and easily shared – all of which supports the process of word of mouth (or ‘word of mouse’).

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<sup>30</sup> Original Finnish text: “Kouluttamalla artistien edustajia ammattimaisemmiksi. Useimmat levy-yhtiö työntekijät omaavat vain ohuen koulutuspojan jos sitäkään.”

### ***How can cooperation between media and artist representatives be improved?***

Based on the received comments, some factors could be identified that play a role in building and maintaining good relationships between media and artist representatives. (All quotes: Media Survey 2010)

One thing that was named often was the importance of forming a ***closer relationship*** and establishing ***personal contact*** by meeting face-to-face. In Finland's small music and media circles, many people have known each other for a long time, many are even good friends. But there are frequently new people taking their seats in music and media offices, so meeting at music events, industry gatherings or just dropping by each other's office one day for a coffee and a little chat when time allows it, are good ways of getting to know each other. Being able to put a face to a name increases also the chances of messages being read, as one of the respondents explained:

*“It would be good if people would know each other face-to-face. As long as the information coming to your mailbox is only received from some unknown spokesperson, the messages will feel impersonal. When the sender is already familiar in a ‘saying hi when we see each other’ way, also the attractiveness of their messages will increase.”<sup>31</sup>*

Personal contact will also help both sides to understand each other better and “*take into account each other's needs and not only think about their own point of view*”<sup>32</sup>. Another respondent explained that it is not only hard for the promoters when trying to get publicity for their artists, but that the situation it is often also not easy for the media:

*“The both sides should understand each other better. I know that it's hard trying to get those artists on the map, but the business is really difficult for ‘us’ as well...”*

As in other aspects of life and work, communication between people should be based on friendliness, helpfulness and good manners. This entails both sides to say thank you for a good job more often, e.g. for the provision of useful information or for some well

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<sup>31</sup> Original Finnish text: "Olisi hyvä, jos ihmiset tuntisivat toisensa kasvoitusten. Niin kauan kuin postilaatikkoon tulevat tiedotteet ovat vain jonkun tuntemattoman tiedottajan lähettämiä, tuntuvat viestit persoonattomilta. Kun lähettäjä on jo 'moikataan kun nähdään' tasoinen naamatuttu, nousee viestienkin kiinnostavuus."

<sup>32</sup> Original Finnish text: "– – osaisivat ottaa huomioon myös toisen tarpeet, eikä miettiä vain omalta kannaltaan."

done media coverage. Some respondents also mentioned the importance of staying in touch, even when there are no releases, live performances or other news for a period of time. Staying in touch is important in any kind of relationship; however, one of the received comments could be interpreted as slightly disapproving:

*“Don’t call if you can e-mail and if it isn’t that urgent business anyway. Don’t e-mail if you really don’t have anything to tell. That is what separates professionals from amateurs. Professionals don’t waste each other’s time.”*

While the above statement is very true with respect to wasting each other’s time, it must be said again that this goes for both sides. Everyone should respond timely to emails and be available to be reached on the phone as well, if needed. Media also need to learn better how to say ‘no’ if they are not genuinely interested. Vague responses such as ‘I will get back to you on this’ or ‘Let me call you about this next week’ do not help the promoter either, if they are not really meant and just given in order to get out of a conversation. Clear and timely responses could also minimize the occurrence of follow-up phone calls, which some of the respondents perceived as pressuring. Best is to find a healthy communication balance for keeping in touch without conveying the feeling of pressure or annoyance.

Generally friendliness and approachability goes a long way, as does not trying to dictate to the other party how to do their job. There is also no need in taking personal offence if media does not show enough interest in an artist. The same applies to media representatives, e.g. if an interview could not be confirmed for a valid reason. One of the respondents expressed that *“we journalists must take some responsibility of the package as well. It’s not just the record companies’ problem to think about the cooperation.”*

## 4.3 Discussion of Interviews with Key Industry People

### 4.3.1 Interview Backgrounds

Altogether five interviews were conducted with the purpose of obtaining views, opinions and other input on the topic from experts in the music and media environment, which could shed some light on music promotion viewed from both sides of the table. Three of the interviews were conducted with media professionals of different media sectors, with the purpose of supplementing the media survey and discussing in more detail how exactly the interviewee's media work, what the decision making process is like and what could need improving and how. The other two interviews were conducted with marketing and promotion professionals to discuss their views on music promotion in general, obtain necessary information about the case study and also pick up some tips and tricks of the trade.

The interviewed professionals were Heta Hyttinen / Rytmi magazine, Jani Kortti / Radio YleX, Jussi Mäntysaari / The Voice TV, Mark Fry and Ramona Forsström / Warner Music Finland, and Milla Palovaara / freelance promoter, booker and music journalist. Short CVs with some more detailed information about each interviewee are attached in Appendix A. All of the interviewees have been working for a long time within different aspects of music promotion and were chosen for their experience, knowledge and backgrounds in order to collect fresh and up-to-date views from diverse angles.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face in English language and recorded on voice recorder. The transcribed interview text was then grouped according to topic and sent to each interviewee for approval. This gave the interviewees the possibility to comment on or correct the information and also ensured that the transcribed information corresponded with what the interviewee meant to express.

The interviews followed a semi-structured approach: they were based on a skeletal structure around a set of themes that needed to be covered, but allowed room for new questions that might have come up based on the interviewee's responses. The



interviewees were encouraged to talk rather freely within the range of the topic. The skeletal structure for the interviews can be found in Appendix B.

#### 4.3.2 Interviews with Media Representatives

The interviewed key media people each represented a different media sector. The media interviews largely followed the media survey, in which all of the interviewees also participated. Having one representative of each media sector available in a face-to-face interview enabled the author to discuss the topic as a whole on a more personal and detailed level than it was possible through the survey.

**Heta Hyttinen** is the editor-in-chief for *Rytmi* magazine, a bi-monthly music magazine for adult music listeners, with a readership of approximately 30.000 (Rytmi). *Rytmi* magazine belongs to Popmedia group, which comprises of the music magazines *Rumba*, *Inferno* and *Rytmi*, as well as the movie and entertainment magazines *Episodi* and *Como*. In contrast to most other music magazines, *Rytmi* focuses more on the people than on current news. Heta explained that in *Rytmi* “we are not trying to follow the news, we’re trying to make news” (Hyttinen 2010). Genre-wise the magazine covers anything and everything that is interesting.

**Jani Kortti** is producer of *Radio YleX*’s *X-Ryhmä* show, which specializes in presenting new music to their listeners. The show airs every weekday from 6pm until 8pm, with an extended programme on Tuesdays until 9pm. *YleX* is the Finnish-speaking youth radio of Finland’s non-commercial national broadcasting company YLE, and reaches on average about 300.000 listeners every day (Finnpanel 2010). The music broadcasted on *YleX* is based on the channel’s playlist, which is the most extensive of all Finnish radios, as well as on songs that the radio DJs select themselves for their shows.

**Jussi Mäntysaari** is producer of *The Voice TV*’s music show *POP* and also head of news desk for *voice.fi*. *POP* is a 30-minutes programme based on interviews with popular domestic and foreign artists. The show is broadcasted every Friday afternoon and repeats on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. All past interviews can also be found

on the channels website. *The Voice TV* is Finland's main music TV channel and reaches on average about 850.000 viewers of all ages per week (Voice). Connected to *The Voice TV* is the *The Voice Radio* and *voice.fi*, which “are all meant to be intertwined; every content is in some form in every medium” (Mäntysaari 2010).

In general the interviews reinforced the impressions that could be gathered from the media survey comments. All interviewees agreed that music media in Finland do have the power of influencing their audiences, but only to a certain degree. Heta pointed out that the majority of people do have enough common sense to not believe just everything they are told by media, and emphasized that “we can guide them, but we can't tell them what to do” (Hytinen 2010).

While Jani was in no doubt about the continuous importance of music being played on the radio, he also acknowledged that nowadays the traditional FM radio is not necessarily the media of choice for finding new music. Depending on artists and labels, music can often be listened to from online sources before it even gets to the radio; exceptions being exclusive pre-listenings, e.g. *YleX*'s album of the week. He stressed that it is therefore “important to create radio personalities, who can share their enthusiasm and passion with the audience; if people trust the DJs, they are more likely to agree with them” (Kortti 2010).

Jussi also brought up a very valid point that is often overlooked, when he shared his thoughts about the consuming patterns for music. Many people, especially those working with music because it is what they love, tend to forget that music itself has a different value for the different consumer groups, as already discussed in an earlier chapter.

*“I used to have this kind of ideological thought that every person in the world is naturally interested in music. They want to listen to music, they want to buy CDs and they want to have a record collection. But the thing is that most people don't care. They like to watch an artist talk, they like to hear their music occasionally on the radio, but they're not passionate about it. They don't own CDs or go to concerts, necessarily.”* (Mäntysaari 2010)

So although it is possible for media to educate their audience about music, artists and trends, thus influencing their musical appetite, they do not have the power to influence their audience's final buying decisions because of every individual consumer's own value system.

All interviewees put their audience's interests in the foreground of the selection process. Content is based on its relevance for the audience and their wants and needs. Even though *X-Ryhmä* is a special music show that focuses on presenting new, non-playlisted music to their listeners, Jani knows that the content of the show has to be easy to listen to. He pointed out that *"we have to make sure that we have listeners, so we cannot play too much new or difficult or strange music all the time"* (Kortti 2010).

Jussi explained that all of the music that is played on *The Voice TV* and also on *The Voice Radio* is not only determined in the channel's playlist jury, but also carefully tested with the audience. The channel's music manager, Sami Virtanen, gets many indications about the music people want to hear from the interactive testing systems the channel makes use of. The systems are explained by Jussi:

*"We have this testing system on the web where people first have to fill out a form that they want to be part of The Voice raati [engl.: jury]. It's open for everybody to sign up who wants to. Then they will hear 10-second clips of different songs and can say if they like it or if they don't like it or if they're bored of it or if they don't know what it is. Approximately twice a year we also organize this big hall research, where an American company selects a good demography based on what we want to test. They select random people who fit into the age group and into the genre group, and then they go into a hall and listen to several hundreds of choruses. They have these kind of volume buttons and if they like it they will put more volume and if they don't like it they will put less volume. If they don't know it they click one button, if they are bored of it they click another button."* (Mäntysaari 2010)

All agreed that a good pre-selection from the promoter's side tremendously eases the job for the media people. Having worked together with someone for a longer period of time helps in being able to better understand the needs of each other and to determine exactly what kind of music is right for that particular person. Jani noted:

*“The artist reps need to check better what we are doing, because if they know what we are doing they won’t just flood us with music that is not relevant for our media and our audience. There are really interesting music genres, which are very popular in a certain audience worldwide, but not everything does fit everywhere.”* (Kortti 2010)

Also Heta pointed out the importance of knowing what kind of content a particular media covers before approaching them. In the case of *Rytmi* magazine, an artist usually has to already be ‘someone’ in order to be considered for an interview. Therefore it would not make much sense to contact *Rytmi* when trying to get visibility for an artist that is totally new and absolutely unheard of, as it is not what the magazine is all about. Although Heta declared that there can be exceptions, if the angle of the presentation suggests that the artist can be connected to something bigger. As an example, Heta named the new Finnish punk band *Pyhät Tepot*, who were chosen for a story in *Rytmi* because they are representing a new wave of the Finnish punk scene, which is *“something bigger than only their music”* (Hyttinen 2010).

While all interviewees agreed that music is most important, they still stressed the requirement for a professional presentation to the media. Media representatives are always busy; they may get hundreds of emails a day, and hundreds of promo CDs a week, so it would be impossible for them to collect the necessary information for each artist. A clear presentation, useful reasoning with regards to the purpose the particular artist/release could have for the media and its audience, as well as easily accessible information and music are the key for a successful presentation. Individual preferences vary, so this again points to the importance of finding out exactly what each single media representative wants. Jussi said that he likes to be able to listen to the music at just one click of a button, so his preference for getting acquainted with new music would be a direct link to the streaming music in an email, which contains the information clearly presented in the email body, rather than in numerous attachments (Mäntysaari 2010). If the music is relevant and will obtain coverage on the media, the physical CD should naturally follow without the need for a special request.

Jani, on the other hand, prefers physical promos for listening to new music, as digital promos might be easy to distribute, but are very time-consuming for the receiver. He explained:

*“It takes so much time to download digital promos. There are too many different systems, and it's also going quite slow. If I have a mailbox full with download links, it's gonna take me half a day to download and listen to them. The time I need to download one song, at the same time I can listen to four or five songs on a proper CD.”* (Kortti 2010)

The importance of building good networks and relationships with each other was brought up by all interviewees. Heta pointed out that in order to get the media interest stone rolling *“it only takes one person who likes your band, but the key is that it has to be the right person”* (Hytinen 2010). By building a strong network and good relationships with the key people, and finding out each contact's preferences, the artist representative is already one step closer in being able to identify who that one media person could be when it comes to a particular artist. Jussi stated that while good contacts and good relationships with each other are key, too close relationships may make it difficult for some to say 'no' in certain situations. In his opinion it is therefore also important to keep a certain professional distance within the network (Mäntysaari 2010). Jani argues that not only can individuals within a network gain from each others' knowledge and capabilities, but it could also be beneficial for all players in the industry to exploit the power of sticking together as one professional team in order to be able to present the consumers with the best music. He expressed:

*“There's been so much bad blood in this business, but especially now that music is on the Internet and free to a lot of people, we should all try to stick together, in live business, record business and media.”* (Kortti 2010)

Both Jani and Jussi, as representatives of broadcast media, pointed out the importance of supporting Finnish music on their channels. Mäntysaari informed that on *The Voice TV* currently approximately 40% of the music videos are Finnish (Mäntysaari 2010). Neither channel has any strict rules or quotas in place as to how much of the music has to be domestic; however, everyone is consciously aware of the fact that listeners and viewers like to hear Finnish music, thus the channels also like to play it.

### 4.3.3 Interviews with Marketing and Promotion Professionals

One of the interviewed promotion professionals was *Milla Palovaara*, now freelance promoter and booker, who has previous experience as promotion manager at indie record labels. The purpose of interviewing a freelance promoter was to get a more independent view on promotional matters, as there is a big difference between working with a label's defined artist roster or with artists one has handpicked themselves.

The main purpose of the interview with *Ramona Forsström* and *Mark Fry* from Warner Music Finland was to obtain information about the selected case study artist, *The Baseballs*. But having two experienced marketing and promotion professionals with extensive experience from working at major labels at hand, there was a good reason to ask them some general questions on the topic of promotion as well. Also the information gathered from these two interviews proved that the general outcome of the media survey contained valid points that a promotion professional needs to take into consideration when doing a good job.

Mark declared that the most basic and important role of any record company is to recognize the talent. In contrast to indie labels, majors usually have more resources, both financial and human, to invest in that talent, but at the end of the day a high financial input does not always equal success; in fact, the success only happens in one out of ten cases (Fry 2010). So there is a 90% failure rate, regardless of the kind of label an artist is signed on, and regardless of the financial input. Thus there is also a 90% risk of economic loss. Also Milla pointed out that money will not solve everything but that it is always the music that counts, and should count (Palovaara 2010).

All interviewees agreed that a good promotion professional needs to learn everything they can about the product they promote. It is important to listen to the music and to "*learn what it's all about, what kind of a difference does this artist make compared to the others*" (Palovaara 2010). Like the artist themselves, the promoter must believe in what the artist is doing. There is an advantage for freelance promoters, as they are able to select the artists they will work with and can reject anything they are not able to fully stand behind. At record company level this is more difficult, as personal preferences cannot always be taken into account when assigning artists to the promotion staff.

Timing and proper planning of the promotion strategy are considered crucial by all. Mark explained that operating under the full (360°) business concept has provided the company with the possibility to do all the planning and scheduling in-house, so they can *“come up with the best possible timeline for different activities for the artist and there is not so much room for miscommunication or no communication at all”* (Fry 2010).

Milla remarked that a promotion strategy not only needs good planning and observing, but also as much as possible active involvement from the artist: determining their goals, giving input, playing gigs, being active in social media and appearing professionally in interviews. Milla’s belief is that *“besides making great music, the artist’s activity in the promotion process is their biggest responsibility”* (Palovaara 2010).

All agreed that media as the gatekeepers are a very powerful tool in order to get the music heard. If no radio plays the song and no magazine writes about the artist, there is nothing to build on. However, all stressed the importance of finding exactly the right person to contact, the ‘champion’, as Mark called it. For every artist there is one specific key person that can start the whole process, and it is important for the strategy to find this *“one person who gives it a chance, and then we have to utilize that momentum”* (Fry 2010). Milla added that *“you shouldn’t just ‘shoot with a shotgun’ and hope for a hit”* (Palovaara 2010).

A professional presentation of the package to the media goes without saying, but even more important is to find the right angle to creatively but genuinely present the case. But there are the 90% of times when an artist just does not fall into anyone’s taste, and then it is also crucial to know when to stop and admit that *“our gut feeling was wrong, it’s not going anywhere”* (Fry 2010). Too much pressure to the media and not taking ‘no’ for an answer is counterproductive, both for the actual case as well as for the future relationship, as all it does is wasting people’s time and resources. Milla revealed:

*“Many times I’ve noticed that if you don’t violently push your case a million times, but just tell the journalists ‘Ok, I’m not gonna call again after this, please give me an answer now’, they might just say ‘Ok, let’s fix this now and start things rolling’. I feel that this method is much better than this everlasting twisting and turning, haunting and forcing.”* (Palovaara 2010)

Mark also illustrated the significance of recruiting the right staff, who have the right mindset for doing this job along with some that are established in the business. As in football, having the right players in the right positions ensures that a team works well as a whole. Mark believes that everyone's *"personality has to somehow fit the team puzzle"* (Fry 2010).

All stressed the importance of keeping good relations with media professionals as well as actively building and increasing one's networks. Important with this is to learn as much about one's contacts as possible, not only in terms of their preferences when it comes to music and communication, but also about their ways of working and what is needed for them to do their job well. As Milla pointed out, *"promotion is not only selling something in every turn, it should also be listening to others and taking other people and their opinions into consideration"* (Palovaara 2010).

As previously established, it is also important to not take a 'no' from the media as a personal rejection and to always keep a professional attitude. Especially in such small circles as in Finland, bad experiences and reputations spread fast and they will stay, making future success less likely. Milla declared:

*"Finland is a small country. It can be really frustrating if you don't get [media] visibility for your artist – – but you can't nurture any hard feelings about it. – – No matter how pissed off you would be because of all the effort you and the band have put in and still you don't seem to get any results, you always have to control your mind and act professional all the time."* (Palovaara 2010)

Mark explained that keeping in touch with the key media professionals and also being able to offer them valuable experiences is important to their company. As a major label, Warner Music continuously has new releases and big international artists on offer, and are therefore in a position to put more financial resources into the maintenance of their media networks. Their promotion staff visits the main radio stations every week in order to introduce new songs to the radios' music managers. Twice a year they also have target-specific presentations to both media and retailers, where they invite key people in small groups to their office, go through the upcoming release schedules, play the music and discuss with their visitors about the music and their opinions. With the live



department in-house they can easily invite media to live events, too. They also are quite active in sending music journalists abroad to see their bands live and arrange interviews, as not all big international artists make it to actually visiting Finland. This requires Warner Music Finland to also have good internal relationships with the other international offices, in order to get interview slots for the Finnish media, because especially bigger artists have limited promotion times and big markets are usually considered more important than such small markets as Finland when it comes to allocating these times. (Fry 2010)

Unfortunately smaller labels do not have all of the options a major label has. They are much less likely to be able to send journalists abroad, and often there are also difficulties in getting an unlimited amount of media professionals on guest lists for live performances, as those options can be limited by the event promoter. However, invitations to live performances as much as possible and otherwise keeping in regular contact with the media by allowing for more personal meetings and face-to-face presentations of new music are ways that can also work for smaller companies.

#### **4.3.4 Case Study: The Baseballs**

*The Baseballs*, a German rockabilly cover band, are the latest phenomenon the Finnish music market has seen. Founded in 2007, their concept of taking contemporary hit songs and revamping them to 50's style has earned them unbelievable success in this difficult Finnish market, and from here the phenomenon took off all over Europe. Their debut album 'Strike!' was brought to the Finnish market in October 2009 and with almost 74.000 albums sold by the end of that year *The Baseballs* were one of only two new artists that were awarded Finnish Platinum in 2009, and the only act to receive Finnish Triple-Platinum in 2009 (IFPI 2010).

With information provided by Warner Music Finland this case study attempts to shed some light on the phenomenon by reconstructing the timeline of the band's success and examining the promotion strategy. In addition to the information that could be obtained from Mark Fry and Ramona Forsström from Warner Music Finland, also the other four

interviewees were asked to summarize their views on the reasons for the Finnish success of *The Baseballs*.

Just before the release of the ‘Strike!’ album in Germany in May 2009, Warner Music Finland’s managing director Nico Nordström brought information about The Baseballs back to Warner’s Finland office after seeing the band performing in Germany. He was convinced that this could work in Finland as well. Warner believed in the concept because it was something unique, and more importantly, because the product was not something that was created artificially. This 50’s style started from the band; it is their lifestyle and not something that was made up to fit the image. Mark emphasized that one cannot fool people because they “*are very cautious about which things are genuine and which are not*” (Fry 2010).

The promoter took the band’s first single ‘Umbrella’ to the radios but did not receive any good feedback in the beginning, except from *YLE Radio Suomi*, who took the track to their playlist. However, this radio station is a news radio with some music content and they play different kinds of music to their broad audience, so their ‘heavy’ rotation is in fact quite light. After sending out the first press release with a video link, more positive feedback started to come in from different kinds of media, even heavy rock and schlager media. Mark explained:

*“It wasn’t genre specific. And that was the key thing. For some reason it translated and connected with people regardless of which genre they were working in or liked.”*  
(Fry 2010)

The track got some random airplay, e.g. on in-station *Radio Helsinki*, and Mark pointed out that they then saw some signals that there was potential. So they decided to bring the band over to Finland for a one-day promotional visit in September 2009. The promoter still struggled to get the media interested in interviews with the band for that visit, so the decision was made that they would need to get the band to do some live appearances on the radio in order to get more airplay. This was phase one of the promotional plan, to “*find a champion to sort of carry the torch*”, as Mark put it (Fry 2010).

According to both, Mark and Ramona, the key was that they found their champion. They chose it to be *The Voice*. Ramona recalled:

*“The Voice Radio had a girl working on their morning show, Elina, who is kinda rockabilly style herself, and she had been listening to The Baseballs before. She knew the band and was very excited, so we go them to visit The Voice to perform ‘Umbrella’ a capella on their morning show.”* (Forsström 2010)

This morning show, *Heräämö*, is broadcasted on radio as well as on TV at the same time. *The Voice* received a lot of feedback from listeners and viewers about how cool this was. Within the channels multimedia concept, the videos of the studio guests visiting are also put online at *voice.fi*. People started sending the link to the video to each other, started spreading it via their Facebook pages etc. Mark noted that the social media picking up on it was one of the key points in the process.

*“It was spreading virally, people started calling in [to The Voice], so the media knew they had a hit and playlisted the track.”* (Fry 2010)

Other radios, e.g. *YleX*, *Radio X3M* and *Radio Rock* added the track quite soon after this first promo visit and at some point *Radio NRJ* and even *Radio Iskelmä* followed. Because of the radio’s reactions, Warner decided to release the album in Finland as soon as possible and booked the band over for a second promo visit to Finland in November 2009, in order to implement phase two of the promotion plan: appearance on a prime time TV show. The opportunity was provided by performing a couple of songs on talk show *Maria!*, which airs once a week at prime time on *Nelonen*. The band also got to perform in the *Big Brother* house. It is not often that artists perform there, but Ramona remembered that it was actually relatively easy to get the band in there because at that time the band’s album had already been out for one month, had climbed to number one and the band had received their first Platinum award. Mark pointed out that even bigger than the actual TV performance was the publicity that came afterwards; the news about *The Baseballs* playing in the *Big Brother* house was everywhere.

At that same promotional visit Warner also arranged a showcase gig at a pretty small Helsinki venue, On The Rocks. They invited their Nordic colleagues to see the band and discuss their strategy, and after seeing the band live, the other Nordic offices started to

plan their releases too. A couple of hundred tickets were sold for the show, and, amongst other interview requests, Ramona also received a call from TV show *45 minuuttia* to do a report on the band and their fans. The report showed some of the fans that had discovered the band only a couple of months earlier after their visit at *The Voice's Heräämö* and followed them from getting ready until the gig.

Another cause for a lot of publicity, without the need of doing by anyone, was the Finnish Independence Day reception at the President's palace, which is broadcasted on TV all evening with approximately 2 million viewers. When the dancing started after the reception, the house band played a rockabilly style 'Umbrella' and the announcer commented, that 'this is the biggest hit at the moment, *The Baseballs'* 'Umbrella', even though the original song is by *Rihanna*, so not even theirs. "So 2 million viewers saw the President dancing to '*The Baseballs'* Umbrella' in the peak of the Christmas season" (Forsström 2010). It was all over the newspapers the next day; even in the evening papers, which up until then had not shown any reaction at all.

Mark admits that the timing could not have been any better and having a number one album in November/December was certainly congenial to the sales. He also pointed out that this was the first case in which the company could really utilize the 360° business model as all activities, from releasing, promoting, marketing and selling the album over endorsement deals to booking the tour were coordinated from within the company. One of these activities was the campaign with Koff for a commercial for Golden Cap cider in early 2010. For the commercial the band even made their own version of a Finnish hit song, *Nylon Beat's* 'Last In Line'. The commercial was heavily shown on TV and gave the band and the song a lot of visibility in virtually every Finnish household.

The band came back to Finland in March to play five sold out club gigs, during which *The Voice TV* followed the band and produced a documentary, which had loads of viewers on TV and also on the channel's website. The documentary is also included on the special edition of the album that was released in summer 2010. Given the fact that the band's success started here in Finland of all places, Mark considers it a "nice compliment to the Finnish fans that we have a Finnish documentary on an international product" (Fry 2010). The band also played at ten Finnish summer festivals, amongst

them traditional ones such as Ruisrock and Ankkarock, and received great reactions. The album was in the charts for over 40 weeks.

All other interviewees agreed that the hype about the band was not media-generated, but that it really was all the people who liked it. One of the reasons people liked it was the history Finland has in rockabilly music, which has been bubbling underground for some time and *The Baseballs* just provided the valve to release it. All of interviewees were also in the opinion that *The Baseballs'* music is not necessarily the music for the traditional CD buyer and music lover, but rather a phenomenon for the masses, regardless of age group. Mark compared the target group to one similar that *Lordi* had when they won the *Eurovision* song contest in 2006. That was a big thing for the entire nation, as big as winning the ice hockey world championships for example, when even people who normally are not that much into ice hockey get sucked into the excitement of the phenomenon.

Being at the right place at the right time and having so much luck certainly had a role in the process. But the basis for *The Baseballs'* success was a combination of several other factors that all played well together:

- a unique and fresh product that differed from the rest and pushed some sort of emotional button with consumers
- a carefully planned and well-timed strategy and its cooperative implementation
- taking the risk and believing in the concept
- letting word of mouth build
- but most importantly, finding the 'champion' – in this case Elina and *The Voice*

Had it been for a different choice of the 'champion' the whole project might not have started rolling at all. The case exhibits that success does not necessarily relate to the biggest possible media visibility. For *The Baseballs* the success came through a "*consumer driven organic growth*" (Fry 2010) that started from the 'champion' and spread through people's word of mouth, and on its course it picked up other media support as well as consumers.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis looked at the principles of music promotion and discussed in more detail what role the media plays in this process. The research focused on the Finnish market and was based on a mix of literature review, personal experience and observations and empirical research in form of a media survey supported by a number of interviews with key industry people. Initially my fear was that I would not be able to gather enough information, but the number and also the quality of survey responses absolutely exceeded my expectations. In the end it almost felt like there was too much information, which resulted in a slightly longer thesis document than it was initially estimated.

The research started from the widely applied and time-tested concept of the marketing mix. The 4 Ps of the original marketing mix are still applicable, but the concept itself has evolved to the 4 Cs in order to focus even more on the consumers' perspective. But while a consumer-focused approach has become an absolute necessity for success, no seller is to disregard the company's needs either. Instead, when marketing a product one needs find a good balance from which both consumers and sellers can benefit.

Publicity is one of the elements in the promotion mix that artists as well as their representatives strongly desire, as it informs the media's audience about the artist and can possibly influence their buying decision. But in order to obtain publicity from the media, the music promoter has to pre-select the product for a target media, make it available and valuable, and successfully communicate it to them. In other words, the marketing mix needs to be adapted to the target audience 'media', in order to obtain a part of the actual marketing mix that can help to attract the target audience 'consumer'.

The current oversupply of music has resulted in fierce competition for media attention and consequently media publicity can often be very hard to obtain. In a small market such as Finland, with limited media diversification and a strong support for domestic music, getting the desired publicity can be difficult for any artist, but especially for not yet established international artists, particularly when they are not signed to one of the major labels. In order to stand out of the masses it is necessary to offer excellent quality

products as well as to produce promotional material that is regarded useful for media professionals and worth to be presented to their audience. It was determined that media interest can be provoked either by the music, the artist's visual appearance, their artistic qualities or a background story.

Generally it can be said that the views obtained through the media survey and the interviews were by and large matching. As opinions always depend on a person's individual preferences, there were naturally some small controversies in the responses, but other than that it was always the same issues that were highlighted as most important: the quality of the music, the quality of the promotional material, accurate targeting, professionalism, understanding of the other side's needs, wants and resources and last but not least building and utilizing a professional network. In fact, it could be established that maintaining a strong professional network appears *the* most important asset for everyone involved in the music business; establishing contact with the right people, knowing what each of them wants, nurturing the relationships and always striving for a reputation of being truly professional may open many closed doors.

It was also established that generally the labels' pre-selection of artists could need some improving. Distribution companies, such as my training company Supersounds Music, are in a more difficult position in that respect, because they usually have a full distribution deal with each of the labels they distribute, so it is either 'all or nothing', thus mostly they are not able to individually choose only the artists they feel appropriate for their market.

Further recommended is that promos should be distributed in the preferred format of the individual media representatives. This means that both digital and physical promos should be available. In cases where the initial pre-release promotion was carried out digitally or with the common plain watermarked copies, media representatives should still be able to receive a physical (and original) product if they wish so. Music companies and media want to work together, so a simple product such as a CD in exchange for publicity should not be too much to ask for if it is of value to the person at the other end. The principle here is to help and be helped by others.

In the following some recommendations that could be concluded from the research are compiled for each particular player in the game. Due to the nature of the research most of the suggestions aim at artist representatives, but it was also possible to conclude a couple of suggestions for both media as well as artists themselves.

### *Artist representatives*

- Establishing trust and a good reputation is a long process. As a newcomer this is the first big step to take, and it is not an easy one. But there has and always will be newcomers. It will help to put them together with a very experienced person in the company so that the newcomer can learn on the job. A good education is surely important, but more important is to learn from a true professional how to play the game.
- Learn all about the media and serve the individual, not the masses. Identify key people and target the right ‘champion’. Even though the survey demonstrated that the majority of media representatives would internally pass on information about an artist, contacting the right person only could save a lot of time, effort and material.
- Compile complete and professional promo packages that meet the media’s needs and cater for individual preferences.
- Create real news about a release or an event and provide the media with ideas about why the artist is material for the media’s audience and how to tie this in with a story.
- Keep yourself updated and educated. Attending industry gatherings and seminars is crucial, both for staying up-to-date about current happenings and trends in the industry as well as for building and widening one’s professional network.
- Be professional at all times, especially when things do not go as planned.



### *Media representatives*

- Communication needs to go two ways. Also if there are many emails and requests coming in, try to respond to all of them timely and give feedback on why there is no interest. Say ‘no’ if that is what you mean; not ‘maybe’. All this gives the other side a chance to understand, learn and improve future contacts, and it will also stop those unwanted follow-up calls.
- When media initiates the request, e.g. in case of big international artists that are very popular with the media, include information about any ideas and plans you have in terms of coverage.
- Be sure to include music companies in your publication’s regular distribution list, or supply a copy on a case-to-case basis when relevant. Representatives from online-based media should also send relevant links to the artist representative once some form of coverage was put online. This is valuable and time saving feedback.
- Inform if you cannot make it to a live event for which you were put on guest list – places are usually limited, so someone else might get to see the show instead.
- Be professional at all times, especially when things do not work out as planned.

### *Artists*

- Promotion is to connect the artist with the audience, and vice versa. An artist needs to understand the importance of being active; do not expect that the label will do all the work. The audience’s wants and needs have changed and it is no longer enough to be the mysterious artist. Actively make use of social media to keep the connection with the audience fresh and alive.
- Fan interaction comes a long way. Make sure to meet your fans face-to-face and also ask them for feedback, and listen. People that are emotionally tied to an artist are more likely to buy in the future, more likely to tell others about it, and also more likely to put additional pressure on the media.
- Be well prepared for interviews: know who you are, why you do what you are doing and where you want to go.

Future research I would like to read about in the future could be to do with the correlation of media visibility and album sales, not only because this issue is apt to so many of the artists I personally like, but also because it is puzzling why some artists may get reasonable media visibility and prove at live gigs that they do have an audience, yet still it does not show in the sales.

Another suggestion for future research builds on an idea that was brought up during the ‘This Is It’ Music Industry Think Tank in Helsinki in 2009: a networking tool for the music industry. It could not only serve as a tool for music industry professionals to share information, contacts and content, but also involve media professionals.

Connected to this I would also like to suggest some research into making digital promotion easier and more accepted. Currently there are several platforms for the distribution of digital promos, which is quite time consuming for the recipient. Instead of having several platforms, there ought to be just one platform that is used by all record labels, and which is building on the concept of a networking tool. Such a system would of course take some time to set up and introduce, but once working it could be a way to make digital promo distribution a lot smoother and less time consuming.

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## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A: Interviewee CVs

**Ramona Forsström** has been promotion manager for international repertoire at Warner Music Finland since 2008. After graduating from a commercial institute with a major in marketing she has collected extensive experience in the field of music promotion while working as promotion manager at both EMI Music and concert promoter Live Nation.

**Mark Fry** is the marketing director at Warner Music Finland. With a background in business administration he has been in the music business for over 15 years, being responsible for marketing and promotion management at both Warner Music and Sony BMG.

**Heta Hyttinen** has been the editor-in-chief for music magazine Rytmi since 2009. She studied classical piano for over ten years and can look back on extensive professional experience in acting, dancing and as journalist and presenter of various TV programmes as well as presenting at music festivals. Amongst others, she was presenter and managing producer of MTV3's music show Jyrki in the late 90s and presenter of YLE's music programme Musiikki-TV. She has also been a freelance music journalist and photographer for publications such as Iltalehti, Suosikki, Rytmi, Rumba and MeNaiset for several years.

**Jani Kortti** started his radio career with national broadcasting company YLE in 1999 and has since worked in many different radio shows as reporter, DJ and music editor. Since 2007 he has been in his current position as the producer of Radio YleX's X-Ryhmä show, where he is responsible for the show's content production and quality maintenance as well as leading the DJ team. He is also a member of Radio YleX's playlist jury.

**Jussi Mäntysaari** is the head of news desk for voice.fi, where he leads a team of four journalists. He is also producer and presenter of the music show POP on The Voice TV. He has a background in print, being the editor-in-chief of freebie magazine Como, and writer for Rumba and Rytmi. He also freelances and has written for Suosikki, Aamulehti and Nyt, among others.

**Milla Palovaara** has a background in journalism, marketing communications and started her career as summer journalist in a regional newspaper and as copywriter for several advertising agencies. During her time as promotion manager at Plastinka Records and Backstage Alliance she worked with artist such as Hanoi Rocks, Michael Monroe, Bloodpit, The Hellacopters and The Wildhearts, to name only a few. She has been freelancing both as music journalist and club promoter for several years and is currently working as venue manager at Bar Loose, Belly and Nosturin Alakerta in Helsinki.

## Appendix B: Interview Structures

### *Media interview structure (Heta Hyttinen, Jani Kortti, Jussi Mäntysaari)*

- Background information about the interviewees and the media they work for.
- How does your media work? Content production process? Internal cooperation?
- How much power/influence do media have in Finland?
- With much more music than there is ever space or time for in the media, how can the newcomer stand out of the masses in the battle for media's attention?
- How important is networking? How do you build and maintain your contacts?
- Media survey questions including discussion.
- The Baseballs: Where did the hype come from? What went right?

### *Promotion interview structure (Milla Palovaara)*

- Background information about the interviewee and her work.
- New artist / new release: How do you approach your work?
- Promo budget major vs. indie: How important is the money anyway?
- Artist promotion from major vs. indie vs. freelance promoter? How different is respectively the reaction of the media?
- How important is the media's role in the promotion process?
- How much power/influence do media have in Finland?
- Any examples of good/bad cooperation with media.
- How important is networking? How do you build and maintain your contacts?
- Some dos and don'ts of the business.
- The Baseballs: Where did the hype come from? What went right?

### *Promotion interview structure (Mark Fry, Ramona Forsström)*

- Background information about the interviewees and their work.
- The Baseballs: reconstruct timeline of success, promotion strategy (however much can be revealed), key success factors of the strategy, the media's role.
- How much power/influence do media have in Finland?
- Any examples of good/bad cooperation with media.
- How important is networking? How do you build and maintain your contacts?

## Appendix C: Survey Questions

### MUSIC PROMOTION AND MEDIA

Please answer the questions as honest as you can from your own experience and base your answers on what the situation is like, not on what it should be. If you have any additional thoughts or suggestions, you may add those to the text box labelled 'Other comments' at the end of this survey.

Vastaa kysymyksiin mahdollisimman tarkasti oman kokemuksesi perusteella ja perusta vastauksesi tämän hetkiseen todelliseen tilanteeseen, ei siihen miten pitäisi olla. Tarkennuksia ja aiheista nousevia ajatuksia tai ehdotuksia voit lisätä kyselyn lopussa olevaan 'Muuta kommentoitavaa'-kohtaan.

#### What type of media do you represent?

(If you represent more than one media type, please choose the one that applies the most and clarify in the 'Other comments' text box at the end of the survey, if necessary.)

#### Mitä median alaa edustat?

(Jos edustat useampaa mediatyyppiä, ole hyvä ja valitse lähimmäksi osuva ja selvennä tarvittaessa "Muuta kommentoitavaa" -kohdassa) \*

- print media // painettu media
- broadcast media // radio / TV
- internet-based media // verkkomedia

#### Media specification // Tarkenna \*

- music press // musiikkilehti
  - teen magazine // nuorisolehti
  - women's magazine // naistenlehti
  - other magazine // muu aikakauslehti
  - newspaper // sanomalehti
  - tabloid // tabloidi / iltapäivälehti
  - music TV // musiikkiin painottunut TV-kanava
  - TV general // muu TV-kanava
  - radio
  - music webzine // musiikkiverkkolehti
  - webzine general // muu verkkolehti
  - news blog // uutisblogi
  - other (please specify) // jokin muu media (kerro tarkemmin)
- 

#### Music genres covered in your media // Edustamasi median musiikkigenret \*

- Alternative
- Classical // Klassinen
- Country // Kantri
- Dance
- Electronic // Elektroninen
- Hip Hop / Rap
- Iskelmä
- Jazz
- Metal // Metallii
- Pop
- Punk
- R&B / Soul
- Rock
- other (please specify) // jokin muu (kerro tarkemmin)

When deciding which artists to consider for coverage in your media (e.g. review, news piece, feature article, interview), how important are the following factors for you:

Kun päätetään artisteista, jotka saavat näkyvyyttä mediassasi (esim. arvostelu, uutinen, juttu, haastattelu), kuinka tärkeitä seuraavat seikat ovat: \*

	absolutely unimportant // ei ollenkaan merkittävä	not so important // ei kovin merkittävä	does not make a difference // ei väliä	important // tärkeää	extremely important // ehdottoman tärkeää
(A) the request was sent by someone from your closer (professional) network // pyynnön esitti sinulle omasta (ammattillisesta) verkostostasi tuttu henkilö	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(B) personal taste // henkilökohtainen maku	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(C) other media has shown interest in the artist // muilla median aloilla on jo osoitettu kiinnostusta	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(D) what record label is the artist on // levy-yhtiö jolle artisti levyttää	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(E) origin of the artist // artistin alkuperä	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you selected 'important' or 'extremely important' for factors D and/or E above, please specify which is given higher priority: (D) Major vs Indie; (E) Finnish vs International.

Jos valitsit 'tärkeää' tai 'ehdottoman tärkeää' kohdassa D ja/tai E yllä, tarkenna kummalla on enemmän merkitystä: (D) major-yhtiö vs indie-yhtiö; (E) kotimainen vs kansainvälinen.

If you are sent information about an artist that doesn't correspond with your personal taste, will you make sure it is passed on internally to someone else who is likely to be more interested?

(If your answer is 'no' or 'sometimes', please give a reason for your answer.)

Jos sinulle lähetetään tietoja artistista, joka ei vastaa omia kiinnostuksen kohteitasi, varmistatko että tieto kulkee sisäisesti jollekulle toiselle, jota aihe voisi kiinnostaa?

(Jos vastaat 'ei' tai 'joskus', perustele vastauksesi.) \*

yes // kyllä

no // ei

sometimes // joskus



"What's new? What's in? What do we need to have?"

Please select your three (3) main sources of information when it comes to new artists and music.

"Mikä on uutta? Mikä on in? Mitä tarvitsemme?"

Valitse kolme (3) pääasiallista tietolähdettä, joista etsit uusia artisteja ja musiikkia. \*

- recommendation from within your professional network // suositus ammattillisesta lähipiiristäsi
- recommendation from friends // suositus ystäviltä
- professional media sources other than the media you represent // muu, kuin oman alasi ammattimedia
- Spotify
- social networking sites // sosiaalisen median sivustot
- other proactive 'hunting' on the internet // muu ennakoiva haku internetistä
- you heard / seen something you liked (e.g. at festivals, multi-artist concerts) // olet kuullut / nähnyt jotain itseäsi kiinnostavaa (esim. festivaaleilla tai useampien artistien yhteiskonserteissa)

other (please specify) // jokin muu (kerro tarkemmin)

An artist or their representative, whom you are not yet familiar with, contacts you with the request for media coverage. What is it that may trigger your interest in the artist (e.g. to try and find out more about the artist, to request/listen to the promo material, to review a release, to attend a concert etc.)? Is there anything that may immediately put you off even looking at it? Please describe shortly.

Sinulle aiemmin tuntematon artisti tai artistin edustaja ottaa sinuun yhteyttä ja pyytää näkyvyyttä mediassasi. Mikä voisi saada sinut kiinnostumaan artistista (esim. etsimään lisää tietoa, pyytämään/kuuntelemaan promootiomateriaalia, arvioimaan julkaisun, käymään konsertissa tms)? Voisiko jokin asia saada sinut kieltäytymään asiasta saman tien? Kuvaile lyhyesti.\*

In your opinion, what could artists and their representatives do to improve their presentation to the media in order to maximize their chances for media coverage?

Miten artistit tai heidän edustajansa voisivat mielestäsi parantaa esittäytymistään medialle maksimoidakseen mahdollisuutensa medianäkyvyyteen?

In your opinion, what could be done to generally improve the cooperation between media and artist representatives in order to make the cooperation mutually as beneficial as possible?

Miten mielestäsi voitaisiin parantaa median ja artistien edustajien yhteistyötä, jotta se hyödyttäisi molempia osapuolia mahdollisimman hyvin?

Other comments: // Muuta kommentoitavaa: