

Chapter 2: Getting Started

Before you run out and start booking your first event there are some things you need to consider. For example, what type of event do you want to put on? What is your budget going to be? Who else is interested in the type of event I want to put on? Do I need insurance? Do I need a license? How do I book a band? How do I advertise? How am I going to find the time to do this all by myself?

This is most likely your first venture. Do not try to swim with the big sharks. Stay away from the major nightclub spots. Promoters are very territorial and will do everything they can, ethical or not, to stop you from succeeding. This is not to say that you will never get to the level where you can hold your own, but you will need a fan base first. I will go into how to develop that in chapter 6.

The first thing you should focus on is what type of music you like listening to. For example, if you like jazz why would you put on a hip-hop event? Yes hip-hop makes money and can draw a crowd, but it is also one of the most high risk events you can host.

Another thing to consider is that you will be at your event all night long. Can you stand to listen to hip-hop all night long? I'm not knocking hip-hop. I have put on hip-hop events and I'm a fan of hip-hop but your first few events have to be something you are passionate about. At the very least it has to be something you can tolerate.

I would give this a lot of thought. You are going to have to convince others to come to your event. Chances are that your friends have similar taste in music that you do. So if you like country western, how are you going to convince your friends to go to an acid rock concert?

Take a good hard and honest look at your music collection. Also think about the age range of the people you like hanging around with. If you view college kids as a bunch of over privileged drunks, then I would stay away from events where they would be your target market. On the other hand if you are in college and love the party scene, how many of your

friends would go to a 50's blast from the past event when they could be out at a real party instead.

Okay now that you know what type of music you will be playing, the next question is do you need a live band or just a D.J. to spin some music? Let's go back and look at your music collection. Is your music collection made up of mainly MP3 tracks, CDs, vinyl or heaven forbid 8-track cassettes?

If you are spinning vinyl you may be better served with just having a D.J. spin for you all night. Have a night where people can get out and enjoy a night out with friends, have a few drinks and dance a little. This is good if you are into Lindsey Swing dance. You don't need a live band to throw an old fashion sock hop. A band may distract from the dancing. People tend to gather around and listen to the band rather than dance. So if you want people up and dancing, a good D.J. is the way to go.

If your collection is more current, then you may want to look into getting a local band with a small following. What? Did you really think I was going to tell you to go out and get the hottest band around? Small local bands are easy to attract and they will help you sell tickets. I'll explain later, in chapter 6, how to get them to do a lot of the promoting for you.

If you are holding on to those 8-tracks, I can't help you. All I can say is let the dead rest in peace. Just kidding, there is a big demand for oldies night. My biggest successes have come from hosting cabarets. I don't mean the strip joint type. I mean real old fashion speakeasies, juke joint, and muddy water review type stuff. My guests range in age from 25 to 90. The big spenders tend to be in the age range of 50 and older. I charged \$25.00 cover per a person for a full show. Couples paid \$50.00 to get in. On top of the cover charge they buy drinks, dinner and they were great tippers.

People love to relive the past. If your 8-track collection is large enough and you have a working 8-track deck, you can throw one big 1970's retro party.

In short your first event has to be something you like and would go to. You are going to have to convince others to come to your event. You can't do that if you wouldn't go yourself.

It's true that a good promoter can promote anything, but you are just starting out. If you take a good look around, you will notice that even top Hollywood promoters only promote certain genres. This is because you will soon build a fan base, and it is hard to get a Pop music fan base to go to a Nashville Review.

Another thing to keep in mind is what time of the evening or day you want to put on your event. Most likely since this is your first time out, you are not going to get a Friday or Saturday evening. Those are primetime slots and are usually reserved for in house events or the top promoters.

So you will have to keep in mind that your guest will have work or classes the next morning. So you don't want the event to go too late. You also don't want it to start too early. You need to give people time to go home and relax a bit.

You may be wondering if you need a license. That depends on if this is a one time event or if you plan to make a business out of it. Check with your local government. Each city has a business license section. Some don't require a license for a home based business and some do.

If you are doing this as a business you will need to register a business name. You don't want to build up a reputation as nightlife-entertainment business only to learn that someone else has that name registered with the county. So go down to your county recorder office (Some may allow you to do it online) and spend a few bucks and make sure no one else is using that name.

If you are setting this up as a business you will need a taxpayer identification number for your company. You can get that from the IRS. Some states require a tax payer identification number from them also. However, for the most part all you will need is the one from the IRS. You may also want to look into incorporating or setting up a limited liability corporation. If you are in the U.K. doing this as a business, you may need a VAT.

