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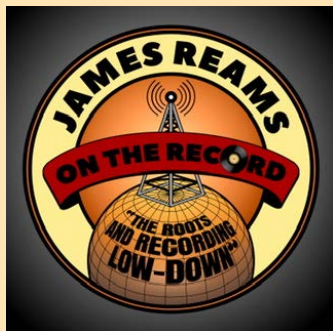
7 Ways to Engage Your Audience and Boost Engagement (Part I)

Musicians of all genres and levels, from the small time troubadour to the international pop super star, spend time traveling up to play shows for the good people in all corners of the world. From huge festival stages to tiny coffee houses and everywhere in between, musicians hawk their wares in hopes that audience members will take home a piece of the evenings magic in the form of a CD, t-shirt, or even a vinyl record, that leave will them wanting more and eagerly awaiting the time you'll bring your show back to their area. This merchandise serves as a business card of sorts, and getting a calling card in the hand of as many people's hands as possible is the key to continued success.

Though the initial sale puts gas in the tank and food in your belly, these reminders of you can provide you more opportunities to share your music in performance in the future. Are you looking for tips on how to improve your presence in the music scene? Having trouble making the connections? As one travels and learns through trial and error, this process becomes easier and your skills sharpen through years of experience. While there's no substitute for getting out there and learning from your own mistakes and successes,

I'd like to share some of the lessons I've learned in my years on the road that I hope will help you with a head start on your music journey.

While I hope to share more experiences as this blog grows, there is on evening that stands out in my mind in



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my journey to learn about connecting with people and building an audience. Some years back, I was promoting a show in Ohio. Travelling to Ohio to fulfill these commitments was no small undertaking, and considering the extra travel and expenses, I was banking on CD sales to beef up my profit margin. After making the trek to Buckeye State, I was disappointed to learn that the show had not been promoted to the extent needed for a successful evening. The posters I sent the venue were never posted, and except for a small newspaper ad, no one in the area had any way to know about the show. When it rains, it pours, and as fate would have it, a major storm hit the area on the day of the show. Most of the people who might have attended stayed home out of the weather, and the show was surely going to be a flop. With hopes growing dimmer by the minute, I started to panic. However, drawing from the advice of mentors and my own experience, I determined that I must act fast if I were to going to be saved from a major financial setback. Marketing is about message and movement, so I jumped up from behind the merch table and began connecting with the folks seeking refuge from the storm outside by browsing the bookstore. I politely introduced myself, and to my surprise, many had heard about my performance, though they had not originally planned to attend. After making these connections and staying at the venue for longer than I had anticipated, I was able to sell all the CDs I had at my table. Though all hope seemed lost, I was able to salvage the evening through merch sales. This evening, along with countless others over my years of traveling, have taught me that while you need to have a good product to sell, human connection is the key to greater success in the music business.

Whether you are getting ready for a major tour or a set at your local farmer's market, here are 3 of 7 hints to consider for increasing your success:

1. Promotion

First and foremost is the promotion of your event. If no one knows you are performing, how will they know to show up? There are many ways to promote your performances, both conventional and some that are less obvious. Posters, newspaper ads, and plugs on your own

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Websites and newsletters are some of the most obvious ways to get the word. Being in touch with local media outlets, including local daytime TV programs and radio personalities who specialize in your type of music, will help promote your work. With social media becoming a prominent part of modern life, you promote your event via Facebook for little to no money as effectively you could through many more expensive outlets. Cultivating a strong social media presence is a must for success in the modern entertainment industry.

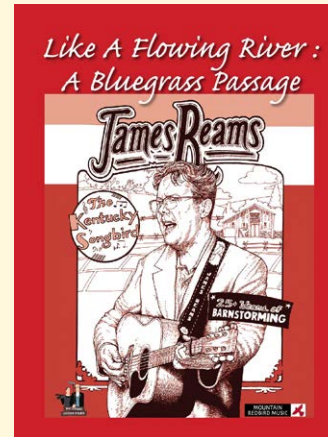
2. Show up early and stay late

Putting in the hours are key to success, and the music business is no exception. Show up early and establish good rapport with the venue staff, and show a willingness to help. Being timely and easy to work with are marks of professionalism, and this makes the process easy for everyone involved. Being a pleasure to work with strengthens relationships and increases your chances of being asked back and good recommendations to other venues. Arriving early and staying late also allows you more time to connect with your audience. Audience members will be more likely to buy your merch and continue supporting you if you make them feel like you care (and if you don't care, I'd suggest finding other work). If you are in a rush, experiences with audience members can easily turn sour, thus hurting your efforts. Allow yourself time to do your best work.

3. Workshops and Jamming

Being accessible is a key element of making connections that will lead to your continued involvement and success in the music. Workshops allow you to share your knowledge with up and comers seeking to hone their skills, but it also gives fans new insight into what you do. A new understanding of your work may help gain you new followers. While the goal is to make money playing music, getting out and playing for fun with fans and potential collaborators builds connections that will allow you to keep coming back to events. Events are always eager to book returning "Fan Favorites," and this is a good way to get yourself in the good graces of fans and promoters alike.

The rest of these tips are coming next newsletter if you want to share please do, if you want to publish just ask me any comments. james@jamesreams.com



Bluegrass Today Feature!

So excited about being featured in Bluegrass Today Magazine for the upcoming film "Like A Flowing River: A Bluegrass Passage." You can click below to see the full article.

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Phoenix Voyage Magazine Article on James Reams

Had a wonderful time with Voyage Phoenix Magazine talking about our journey and our music.

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