Creating Effective Facebook Events

Fourteen rules to get more people to your shows

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Musicians have been debating the efficacy of Facebook as a promotional tool for years now.

Many turned away from the platform altogether when Facebook started charging artists to extend the reach of content that at one time was connecting with a much larger percentage of their followers for free. (Indie musicians aren't known for their giant promotional budgets, and besides, it didn't seem fair to have to drop a bunch of cash just to communicate with fans that'd already liked their band pages.)


One aspect of a Facebook page that definitely IS still useful for bands, though, is the Facebook Events feature. Since Facebook pages are public, you can use Facebook Events to announce shows and other important events, get people excited about your band, and encourage fans to share your music with their friends.

Fourteen things to keep in mind when creating and moderating a Facebook Event:

1. Create the event from your page, NOT from your personal profile

As mentioned above, your band page is public, so anyone who visits will be able to view your events. That's a good thing when it comes to getting people to your shows: the more visibility, the better.

Once you've created the event and shared it with fans of your band page, you can switch back to using your personal profile and share the event with your Facebook friends, too.
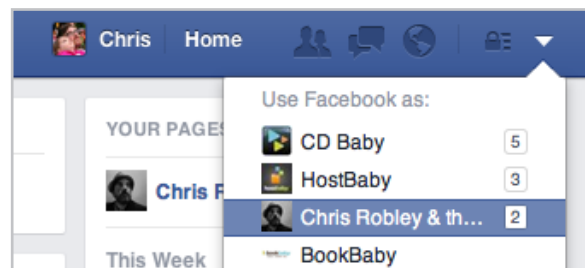
2. You MUST have an event photo

People love visuals. An awesome picture for the event will help bring the show to life in the imaginations of your fans. Events that don't have images often get ignored. So upload an engaging event photo, and remember to size it appropriately for the banner/header space where it will be displayed.

3. Give fans ALL the info

Contrary to conventional web wisdom, less is NOT more when it comes to the description of your event. Why is this show important? What are you looking forward to most? How will your fans be able to help make this a really special concert? Are there any new songs you'll be introducing? Are you selling new merch items? Let the world know!
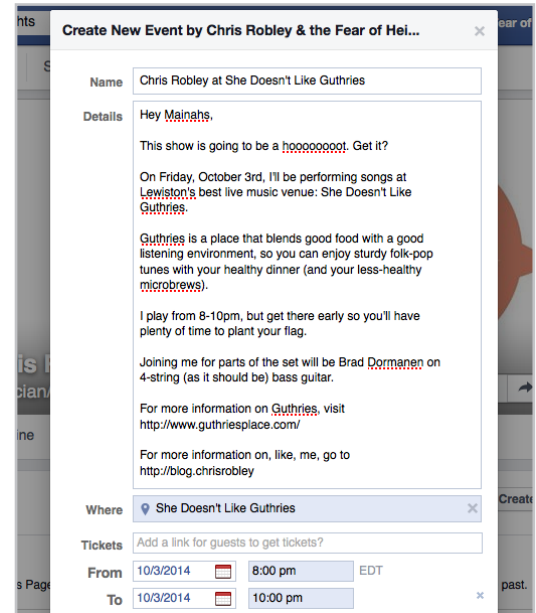
4. Get your dates, times, and places straight

It's easy to click the wrong thing when Facebook auto-suggests a time, duration, venue, or city for your event. You don't want it to look like you're playing a 24-hour concert when your set is only 45 minutes long, or have fans showing up at the wrong venue on the wrong night. Double-check all the details before publishing your event on Facebook.
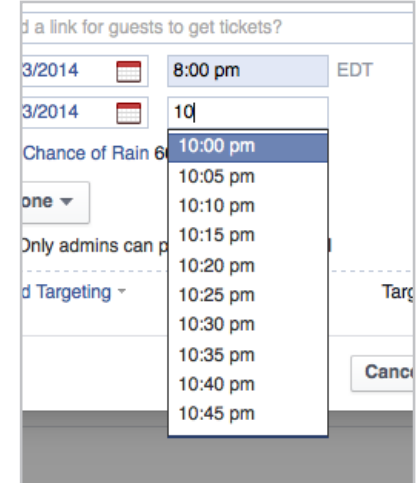
5. Link to the venue and ticketing site

If you've already tagged the venue, Facebook will usually know the address and properly fill in the location details for the event. But it's a good idea to include this info in your event description as well, including the venue's web address and a link where fans can purchase tickets. Potential attendees might want to check out pictures on the venue's site, see what other bands have played there, etc. And, of course, they might want to buy tickets!

6. Include links to the other bands' websites and content

If you're sharing the bill with other acts, give them some promo love, too. Link to their websites in the event description, and post any show fliers/posters they may've designed as well. Then your fans can get excited about the show as a whole, not just your set — and that will help ensure that they actually come to your show. Which brings us to...
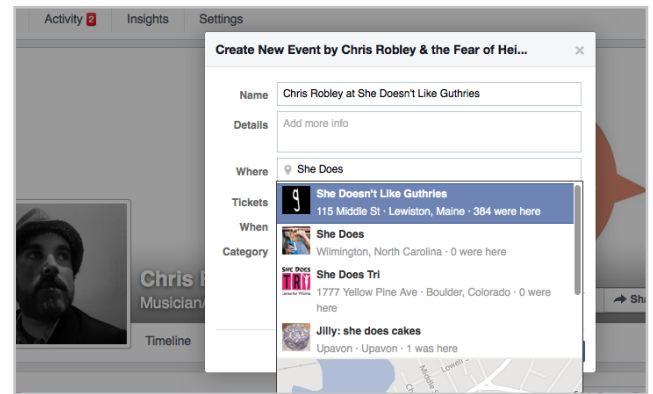
7. Remember, RSVPs aren't solid

If 120 people tell you on Facebook they're going to your show, you can usually count on half of them flaking out. It's just the law of Facebook Events.

BUT, it's still a benefit to you that those people initially RSVP'd, because Facebook is a social environment; it's all about what seems to be buzzing. The more people that say they're going to attend your show, the more people will get excited about the event, increasing the chances they'll share it or RSVP themselves. Some of the "maybes" might turn into confirmed guests through this tumbling process.

8. Make sure every band is promoting the same Facebook Event

If there are multiple bands on the bill, don't double or triple your efforts with multiple Facebook listings for the same concert. Instead, get one band to create the event and add the others as administrators for the event. You won't just save time and energy —that momentum mentioned above will be easier to build because all the people that say they're going to attend the show will be tallied on a single page, boosting your RSVPs!

9. Let your fans know about the event well enough in advance

You don't want to create a Facebook Event the night before a show. People need to plan, hire babysitters, take time off of work, have their noses pierced, and get their leisure suits out of storage.

On the other hand, you don't want to create an Event so far in advance of the show that people have forgotten all about it by the time the concert date nears. Three weeks out is usually sufficient warning.

10. Send out the invites when people are most likely to be sitting at their computers

Don't send out your Facebook Event invites at 4am on Wednesday night. Time your event-creation and updates for when people will actually SEE them! Sunday evenings are good. Similarly, if you use your personal profile to invite friends to your band event, time those invites according to THEIR schedules (or your best guess at their schedules, at least).

11. Don't invite EVERYONE

This is especially true when you're sharing your events from your personal profile. Chances are you have Facebook friends from all over the world. How many of them are going to be able to attend your Tuesday night show in Indianapolis? Only invite THOSE people. Otherwise you're going to irritate some of your followers, and they'll be less likely to engage when your announcements DO pertain to them.
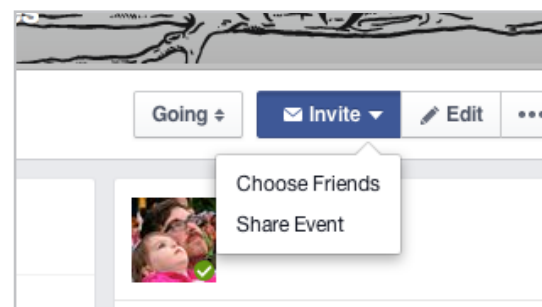
12. Update your events regularly

Your Facebook Event is a living organism and it needs to be fed. It has its very own wall with activity, comments, invite info, etc. Your invited guests get notified when you make updates, so don't treat the Event page like a static thing. Share videos or links to music from all the various bands on the bill; talk about your show preparations; converse with your fans who've confirmed they're "going" so they'll be more likely to actually go. You get the point: be active!

Then again, don't be hyperactive. You don't want to annoy your fans with constant reminders and updates. Shoot for two or three updates a week.
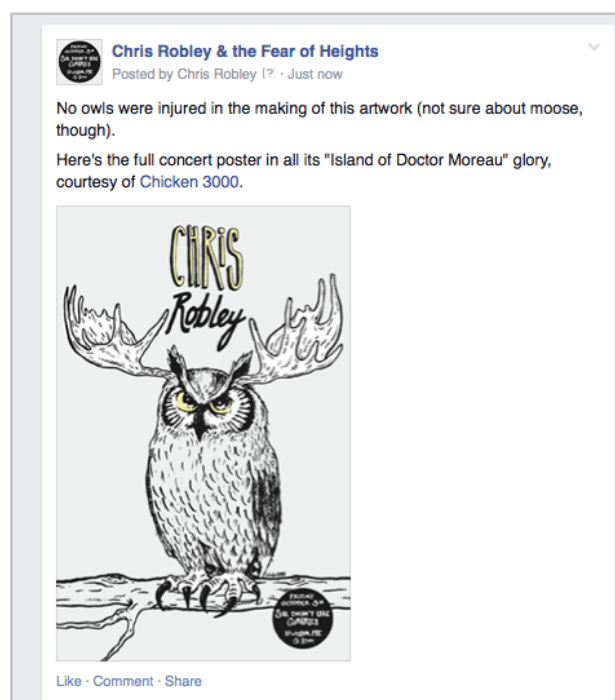
13. Bear in mind, Facebook Events aren't limited to concerts

You can use Facebook Events to promote anything in your music career that has a time-based element to it. For instance, if you're launching a crowd-funding campaign that lasts for 30 days, you can create a Facebook event to coincide with it. That gives you yet another way to communicate with your fans, thank contributors, etc.

14. Pay to promote your most important events

Yes, one of the benefits of creating a Facebook Event is that it's an effective and FREE promotional tool. But if you want to announce something like an album release show, video premiere party, or a Kickstarter campaign, it might be worth paying Facebook to "boost" your event so it's even more visible.

You've announced it on Facebook. Now it's time for the REAL event!

Hopefully these tips help you create Facebook Events that inspire fans to come out to your shows, buy your band merchandise, and support your independent music career. For more advice on independent music promotion, distribution, touring, and recording, check out CD Baby's DIY Musician Blog, updated daily with tips from the experts.

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