Booking Venues – 101

"Why aren't venues getting back to me?"

I've seen it all over social media. Bands complaining they're being ghosted. Emails going unanswered. Calls not returned. And yet, in the same breath, I see posts of those same musicians sitting in a park or in their homes, laptop open, scrolling through Facebook, waiting for the phone to ring.

What Works Even Better

- **Consistent email follow-up.** Break the ice. Be persistent but not spammy. Become a familiar name.
- **Handwritten notes.** On a pre-made card, in an envelope, with a QR code to your EPK. Postcards get tossed. Handwritten envelopes get opened.
- **Phone calls.** It's harder to say no to a human voice than to delete an email. Pick up the phone.

What Works Best

- **Having regulars at the venue ask when you're coming back.** If your fans are their customers, venue owners listen.
- **Walking in and meeting the owner or manager face-to-face.** This is the single most effective thing you can do. You're real. You're memorable. You're hard to ghost. Stop driving past that venue saying "we should play there" and *walk in*.
- **Asking for the rebook immediately after a great show.** If you packed the place and they made money, ask for a date before you leave the building.

One More Thing

Running a band is a business. Treat it like one.

Think about the businesses you support. Why do you go back? What did they do to earn your loyalty? Apply that same logic to your music career.

Show up. Be professional. Be persistent. Be someone they *want* to work with.

And stop waiting for the phone to ring.

Coming Next Month

This is just the tip of the iceberg. In future issues, we'll dive deep into each of these strategies—how to craft the perfect EPK, what to say when you walk into a venue, how to follow up without being annoying, and much more.

We're just getting started.

Here's the hard truth: **the phone isn't going to ring if you're not out there knocking on doors.**

The economy is tough. Venues are being cautious. Budgets are tight. But that doesn't mean opportunities don't exist—it means you have to work *harder* and *smarter* to find them.

Over the coming months, we're going to break down the art and science of booking gigs into a series of detailed articles. But for today, I want to give you the big picture—a ranked list of strategies from least effective to most effective.



What Doesn't Work (Or Doesn't Work Well)

- **Cold emails with no follow-up.** Easy to ignore. Easy to delete.
- **Posting on social media hoping venues find you.** Venues are busy. They're not scrolling looking for you.
- **Having non-regular band friends vouch for you.** If they don't have a relationship with the venue, their word means little.
- **Sending a generic postcard or mailer.** It gets thrown away.

What Works Better

- **Do your homework.** Check out venue flyers. Who's played there? What's their vibe? Are you a good fit? Don't book a gig just to book a gig—if you're a country dance cover band playing an outlaw country venue, it won't end well.
- **Know your competition.** What do they charge? Where do they play? And here's the kicker—make them your *friends*. The indie music community is stronger when we lift each other up. Referrals from fellow musicians are gold.
- **Watch your social media (not just your band page, but your personal pages as well).** Venues *will* check your pages. Controversial content, badmouthing past venues, or unprofessional behavior is a red flag. Don't burn bridges.