



Boston Festival Wrap Up

We thought you'd be interested in a summary of our pilot event, **Premier Guitar Festivals: Boston**. Although the initiative is really a two-pronged experiment -- a live event followed by an online, on-demand event -- we'd like to provide you with the following summary and key "learnings" on the live Festival itself:

Background

We view consumer events as a key element of music industry marketing and thus set out to "crack the code" on staging a multi-faceted consumer event that would fulfill attendee, exhibitor, and sponsor expectations.

We believe that the typical Guitar Show model (table-top, vintage, buy and sell catering to dealers) does not deliver enough marketing impact to attract, nor serve, manufacturer participation and does not fulfill the wide spectrum of attendee reported interests. Our pre-event research confirmed this.

[**Click here to view this research...**](#)

However, considering the success of other special interest events (fishing, golf, home, etc.), we believe there is unlimited potential for a musician-centric event, and thus our interest in this area.

We budgeted the Boston Festival way beyond what made sense for a single event. However, our intent was to "pull out all the stops" in every area, carefully track performance and response, and then assess what worked and what didn't work. Here are a few of our key investments:

- The marketing budget alone topped \$145k with a media plan spanning radio, billboards, print, email, direct mail, and street marketing. Over 50,000 fliers alone (die-cut in the shape of guitar picks) were handed out on Boston campuses, at music events, at retail, and wherever musicians were likely to hang out (rehearsal studios, clubs, etc.).

[**Click here to listen to one of our radio spots...**](#)

[**Click here to view representative billboard advertising...**](#)

[**Click here to view representative print advertising...**](#)

- An additional \$20k was invested in PR and resulted in numerous TV, print, and radio mentions and features.

[**Click here to view Boston Herald Story...**](#)

[**Click here to view the New England This Afternoon TV Story ...**](#)

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- We invested heavily -- to the tune of \$95k -- for facilities, signage, space, and on-site labor to ensure a highly-professional appearance and adequate space for conducting demos, workshops, and live performances.
- We likewise invested \$120k in sound, lighting, backline, equipment, and video -- including an on-location film crew consisting of 9 shooters, 6 grips, and 7 sound techs. This investment was made to ensure the quality of live performances and workshops, as well as the ability to film booths, workshops, clinics, and live performances for the **on-demand event**.
- Staff-wise, we brought 27 of our own personnel and hired an additional 15 people to manage on-site activities, service and support exhibitors and oversee all of the workshops and performances.

The Live Festival

The Festival opened on a rainy Saturday at the Bayside Expo Center in Boston. Despite the initial weather and the Red Sox and Yankee showdown, more than 3,600 paying attendees (3,619) registered and spent the better part of two days on the show floor visiting exhibits, in workshops, and at live performances.

While we have yet to tabulate all of the response data, it appears that radio, print, and PR were the most influential media factors.

- Festival facilities and the exhibit space looked fantastic, and there was lots of activity on the show floor, in workshops, and at the live performances.

[Click here to view a video montage of the event...](#)

[Click here to listen to our podcast of the festival...](#)

[Click here to view a photo gallery of the event...](#)

- Despite a reasonably heavy marketing campaign on campuses, the vast majority of attendees were older (25-45) amateur musicians, primarily white-collar. Consequently, manufacturers were quite pleased with the quality of attendees. While some retailers were disappointed with the total number of attendees, manufacturers were pleased with the traffic and results, particularly for a first-time event.

[Click here to view the exhibitor survey...](#)

- The on-demand program when it airs is expected to deliver tens of thousands of additional visits from guitarists. Interestingly, the **www.PremierGuitarFestivals.com** website itself alone attracted almost 150,000 visitors and over 1.5 million page views in the 3 month period leading up to the festival.
- Countless exhibitors expressed both appreciation and surprise for the support provided by our staff. At least a dozen Premier Guitar employees donned their work clothes to help exhibitors cart their merchandise and displays to assist them with set-up and pack-down. Any issues were addressed immediately and professionally. Clearly, we set a precedent by providing such a quality level of service in this area.

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- The workshop schedule, curriculum, and faculty of educators were extremely well received. Workshops were for the most part filled to capacity on Saturday and most of Sunday. Over 90% of the attendee workshop surveys scored curriculum, instructor, presentation, and materials with straight A's.

[*Click here to view the workshop survey summary...*](#)

- The concerts, live performances, and "Up Close and Personals" were nothing short of stellar. Attendees were treated to the likes of **Robben Ford, Johnny A, Muriel Anderson, Monte Montgomery, Frank Vignola, Duke Robillard, Mimi Fox, J. Geils, Trey Alexander, Peter Stroud**, and dozens of other exceptional artists.
- Attendees rated their experience very highly, many of them spending as many as 12 hours at the Festival, on Saturday, visiting exhibits, participating in workshops, and enjoying Saturday night's All-Star Guitar Night concert hosted by Muriel Anderson.

[*Click here to view the attendee survey summary...*](#)

- Three key complaints kept the event from registering a perfect score with attendees and exhibitors: sound enforcement, parking and overall attendance.
- The workshop rooms were side by side and sound leaked from one to the other. To further exacerbate the issue, we had assigned a hallway next to the workshop rooms to amp exhibitors (need I say more?). And finally, some of the exhibitors on the show floor were demonstrating at very high volumes, and we should have done a better job of policing them. As you can imagine, this was disturbing to neighboring exhibitors.
- Bayside Expo Center is a facility that charges participants for parking on its lots – no matter who is hosting an event there. Unfortunately, this was a non-negotiable item and added to the expense and stress for exhibitors and attendees.
- Regarding attendance, there's no argument that more attendees would have made everybody happier – us included. Meanwhile, the general consensus is very positive about the 3,619 attendees that walked through the door for our first event.

All in all, we're pleased with the results, and we certainly learned what we were hoping to learn. Specifically, we now know what media components work best for this target audience, what activities attendees find attractive and beneficial, and how much they are willing to invest in this kind of an event (we tested several price points).

On the exhibitor side, we learned that the quality of attendee is much more important than the volume of attendees (naturally, this is truer for manufacturers than retailers). We also learned how imperative it is to provide sound reinforcement and policing for an event of this nature.

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From the producer and promoter side of the event, we learned that bigger is not necessarily better. In fact, we are likely now to test smaller, localized events with fixed attendance, which may be a more viable solution than staging convention-sized events. This is particularly true because of the level of interest and participation in the workshops, educational activities and product demonstrations, which were clearly perceived by attendees to be the key components of the Festival.

The On-Demand Festival

We now have over 250 hours of solid educational, informational, and performance video footage to sift through, edit, and post. All of this content will be segmented, categorized, and presented on an online, InternetTV platform, which we'll call **"Premier Guitar Festivals: On Demand!"**

We expect to have this platform live by the end of the year and will promote it aggressively across our existing network of properties to almost one million domestic and international guitar enthusiasts. This online experience will be free to the general population, and we intend to monetize it initially through sponsorships and online advertising.

Next Steps

We'll complete all of our tabulations and assessments and share any additional insight with you accordingly.

We'll remain focused on launching the **On-Demand** version of the Festival and will likewise keep you informed of our progress. We'll also be presenting you with a variety of associated options that might attract your participation over the next few months.

We will not move forward with the two big product and education oriented events scheduled for November and December. Too many retailers, in particular, thought the calendar and the geography had become too crowded with other entrepreneurial show producers recently moving into New Jersey. However, we do plan to test a smaller, new product and education oriented events in the near future. We will keep you posted on that as well.

Thank you for your participation and/or interest in our live and virtual event activities. We hope these key findings serve as a useful reference for you. Please feel free to contact me directly should you have any specific questions or suggestions for our event initiatives moving forward.

Sincerely,

Peter F. Sprague
Managing Member
PremierGuitar Shows, LLC
Phone: 319-895-0050

Premier Guitar Festivals would like to thank the following sponsors for their support:

The Marshall logo, featuring the word "Marshall" in a stylized, cursive script.

The KORG logo, featuring the word "KORG" in a bold, blocky, sans-serif font.

