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Music Festivals On The Rise

The music industry is catching its second wind. Though record sales have slumped during the last dozen years, there’s been a sort of festival gold rush during that same period. In 2013, we saw the most new festivals ever, with even more festivals expected to launch in coming years. With artists and their labels embracing brand partnerships and festival appearances, it’s much easier for artists to reach their fans on a large scale and make a little cash, but also for brands to make a deeper connection with their audience.

1 in 10

One in ten Americans attended a music festival in the past 12 months.

Up 34%

Social media conversations around music festivals spiked 34% this year compared to last.

The dramatic increase in buzz, ticket sales and attendance has made music festivals the perfect place for brands to have extended exposure to a (literally) captive audience.

Sources: Time, IEG, Wondering Sound, Eventbrite, Billboard.com, marketingcharts.com
Why Brands Should Take Notice

Music has the unique ability to transcend age, gender and culture, making music festivals an ideal place for brands to interact with consumers, both to convert new fans and make existing ones even more enthusiastic.

BRAND CONSIDERATION AMONGST FESTIVALGOERS

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>'More likely to buy a sponsor’s product'</td>
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<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>'Believe brands improve the festival experience'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>'Interact with two or more brands at festivals'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>'Like the brand activations visited'</td>
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Sources: IEG, AdAge, Nielsen, Havas Media

Festivals can be an exciting place for brands to activate. It can also be expensive. It is crucial for them to be strategically smart, even a little surprising, when engaging and investing at festivals.
The Face Of The Festivalgoer

QUALITIES:
- TECH-SAVVY
- socially conscious
- interested in what’s new & next
- Affluent
- PASSIONATE

THE LINEUP
- THE WHOLE WHOLE
- THE FASHION
- THE EXPERIENCE
- THE ARTIST
- THE GETTING THE
- REMOTELY REMOTELY

WHAT FESTIVAL FANS ARE MOST EXCITED FOR
- 39%
- 23%
- 17%
- 10%
- 8%
- 5%

AGE
- 3%
- 31%
- 45%
- 14%
- 7%

52%
45%
3%

GENDER

MILLENNIAL FAST FACTS:
- Population: 76.6 million
- Buying Power: $889.3 billion
- Median Household Income: $57,034

{Sources: SXSW.com, Eventbrite, Market Wired, Mashable, Nielsen, Iconoculture}
Festival Tiers

To dive deeper into the festival experience, we’ve created a system of categorizing festivals by size and type:

1. **100,000+ Attendees**
   - High-profile festivals that guarantee exposure to diverse audiences.

2. **50K – 90K Attendees**
   - Large audiences as distinctive as the festivals themselves.

3. **<30,000 Attendees**
   - More niche and local in nature.
Organizers of Tier 1 festivals curate the overall festival experience to include elements for large, diverse audiences like farmer’s markets for the conscious consumer – even kid-sized festival areas for attendees with children. For a brand, it can be hard to connect with these very different targets without adding to the other noise and clutter. Messages often get lost among the crowds, making it harder to reach festivalgoers.

- **PROS**: attracts top tier talent, possesses a robust social presence, offers a variety of footprints, upgrades (VIP elements), access to large and diverse audiences onsite and on social
- **CONS**: high cost of entry, high risk of brand messaging getting lost in the masses, other brands may have your same “unique” assets
ABOUT THE FEST:
Lollapalooza is a music experience that attracts a slew of loyal festival junkies to Chicago at the height and humidity of summer. The fest started out as an “alternative” music event, but became more diverse as it has grown. Tickets are known to sell out in minutes, long before a single lineup announcement is made.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Attendees of Lolla fall into two groups – those there for the music and those who go for the experience. Many festivalgoers blindly purchase passes without seeing the lineup, knowing they’ll be in for a party regardless of who’s playing.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
In recent years, organizers of the fest have become more selective with their festival partners. Past sponsors include Bud Light, Bed Head, Samsung, CamelBak, Toyota, Gap, Uber and f.y.e.
ABOUT THE FEST:
SXSW is the culmination of music, film and digital media events held every spring in Austin, TX. The city turns into a hub for creativity and chaos. While there are official showcases dedicated to the “Ideas Economy” held in the main conference center and venues around town, events and unofficial parties always pop-up in unexpected places.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
The fest is famous for attracting entrepreneurs and influencers from around the world, but is still a destination for upcoming artists and music fans.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Brands are no stranger to SXSW and are known to cause quite the media circus. Some of those brands include Oreo, Samsung, TOMS, Miller Lite, CNN and IFC. Just don’t get too caught up in all the buzz, or else your brand’s messaging can get lost.
MIAMI, FL
Late March (Spring)
330K total attendance
Duration: Two weekends

ABOUT THE FEST:
The Ultra Music Festival is a massive electronic dance music event that draws attendees at record-breaking numbers. UMF stays true to its roots by presenting at the same level of Europe’s leading electronic dance festivals. Described as diverse, sexy, youthful and energetic, the festival is known to create the best rave party experience.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
This crowd comes to party. While the audience is ethnically diverse, this demo shares one great passion – dance. Looking around the festival grounds, you’ll see lots of people dressed to stand out. This audience is definitely not one for subtlety.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Ultra sponsors in the past include Heineken, Belvedere, Absolut, SiriusXM and Red Bull.
ABOUT THE FEST:
The Outside Lands Music Festival is an event of music, food and art held on the western end of Golden Gate Park. The local foodie culture in San Francisco plays a role in influencing some of the programming, with organizers offering an array of culinary experiences to complement an eclectic musical lineup.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
The audience at OL is typically full of conscientious consumers, trendsetters and those who come prepared with herbal refreshments – if you catch our drift. The “local” movement is in full swing at the festival, with many supporters coming out to enjoy the experience.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Past partners include Heineken, PayPal, Barefoot Refresh, Levi’s, Sierra Nevada, Vita Coco and ECO Products.
ABOUT THE FEST:
Austin City Limits is a music festival that takes place in Zilker Park at the heart of Austin. The event brings together 130+ artists of all genres, but still maintains a friendly folk feel. Known for booking one of the strongest lineups in the festival circuit, it’s easy to see how Austin got its reputation as the “Live Music Capital of the World.”

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
The festival lineup transcends demographics and attracts a diverse group. Though mainly young Millennials, you’re bound to catch some aging rockers jamming out with the college crowd.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
ACL has grown at an astounding rate and is taking sponsorships and their brand identity to new heights. Past partners include Pizza Hut, Viacom, Tito’s Handmade Vodka, Bud Light, Samsung and Honda.
Randall’s Island, NYC
Early June (Summer)
120K total attendance
Duration: Three days

ABOUT THE FEST:
The Governors Ball Music Festival is a music event that serves up a fun-loving, rebellious attitude on top of a lineup that features acts across a wide range of genres. The New York Times called it “a festival with a New York heart.” In the same state that brought us Woodstock, Governors Ball manages to evoke similar vibes.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
The organizers of GovBall seem to really know their audience. They go out of their way to bring in local, small-scale and artisan food vendors to feed the Brooklyn foodies who flock to the festival. Beyond the culinary snobs, GovBall attracts the city’s most fashionable trendsetters.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
The festival has only been around for a few years, but has partnered with several top brands. Past partners include Gap, Honda, Miller Lite, Citi, PayPal, Don Julio and Camelbak.
Like Tier 1, these festivals attract a large audience, just not quite as diverse. Festivalgoers at these events are cut from the same cloth, often having similar interests, lifestyles and brand behavior. And once they’re all in the same place, communities form organically. The overall experience at these festivals tend to reflect the audience, which gives brands exposure to more specific targets.

- **PROS**: attracts top tier talent, access to large communities onsite and on social, upgrades (VIP elements)
- **CONS**: high cost of entry, high risk of brand messaging getting lost in the masses, other brands may have your same “unique” assets
INDIO, CA
Mid – Late April (Spring)
90K total attendance
Duration: Two weekends

ABOUT THE FEST:
The Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival transforms the desert in Southern California into an oasis of music, art and harmony. Since its inception, the festival has offered music fans the ultimate playground. While the heart of the festival is in music, Coachella has become a media spectacle with much focus being put on “the scene.”

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Coachella attracts crowds en masse, from tattooed hipsters, Hollywood stars incognito, to ravers and beach bums. People fly in from all across the world for the experience.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Past partners include Lacoste, H&M, Heineken, Sony, T-Mobile and Red Bull. Activations at Coachella are known for their extravagance and VIP experiences.
ABOUT THE FEST:
Bonnaroo gives festivalgoers a little taste of the south. In addition to killer musical lineups year after year, the festival also focuses on comedy and creating a premier outdoor camping experience.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Free spirits. The audience is a friendly bunch with open-minds and open hearts. The experience at Bonnaroo bonds attendees together to create an enduring community. Attend Bonnaroo once, and you become a part of this group of wild cards who don’t mind getting a little dirty.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Brands have been activating at Bonnaroo for years, arguably enhancing the festival experience for attendees in many different ways. Partners in the past include Xbox, Ford, Garnier Fructis, State Farm, Ben & Jerry’s and PayPal. After sponsoring once, many brands come back to activate again.
ABOUT THE FEST:
The Firefly Music Festival is set among lush wooden landscapes, with a little bit of everything for music fans of all types and genres. The evergreen setting and shady oak trees create a relaxed camping environment and evokes feelings of nostalgia for carefree summer days.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Like Bonnaroo, Firefly attracts young audiences like moths to a flame. Firefly becomes home to a passionate community of people who shop at farmer’s markets and practice yoga regularly. They tend to be carefree and consider Firefly an escape from the chaos of everyday life.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Firefly partners with brands that create an organic bond with attendees and enhance the overall festival experience. Dogfish Head Brewery makes a specially-brewed beer for the festival and TOMS Shoes lets you customize your own pair.
CHICAGO, IL
Late July (Summer)
55K total attendance
Duration: Three days

ABOUT THE FEST:
The Pitchfork Music Festival is a creation of the internationally-recognized music website known for its smart, but snarky music journalism. The event showcases a laundry list of music’s best emerging indie artists and bands, while also serving up a selection of festival favorites.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
This ishipster-mecca. You'll find no other place that has as many people who “heard it first” or are constantly on the lookout for the next big thing. If you want to mingle among the early adopters and trendsetters, this is definitely the place.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
The festival plays host to several independent vendors and corporate sponsors. Past partners include Goose Island Brewery, Ray-Ban, Chipotle, Whole Foods, Vans, Hostess, Heineken and Basecamp.
ABOUT THE FEST:
FFFFest is an independent festival renowned for its eclectic musical lineup, as well as its collection of comedy, food, action sports and poster art experiences. The festival is a creative, progressive event that curates a smattering of passion projects for fans of the underground.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Freaks and Geeks. Festival co-owner James Moody says the fest is “for nerds, by nerds,” and caters to niche subcultures, which by some accounts is an elusive consumer audience to reach.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Past partners include, Shiner Beers, Tito’s Vodka, Volcom, Red Bull Select, Blu Electronic Cigarettes, Hostess, HEB and KIND.
Tier 3 festivals may be smaller in size, but the crowds make up for it with their enthusiasm. In smaller venues and more intimate settings, festivalgoers rally together over their shared passions. With many of the festivals being community-driven and supported, brands have the opportunity to interact with leaders and influencers in those markets.

- **PROS**: access to niche - harder to reach audiences
- **CONS**: smaller audiences with potentially higher brand sensitivity
NEWPORT, RI
Late July (Summer)
30K total attendance
Duration: Three days

ABOUT THE FEST:
The Newport Folk Festival is known to the world as the platform that introduced a national audience to artists like Joan Baez and Kris Kristofferson. The festival has a rich history and continues to stretch the boundaries of folk music today. Very much a family affair, the festival grounds also offer arts and crafts. This is a special fest for fans of folk. It’s not the biggest or flashiest, but people come to see how Newport is shaking up what you think you know about this genre.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Among the locals and multi-generational families, you’ll find the most genuine souls. This audience is no stranger to going against the grain and look for brands who do the same.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Past partners include Alex and Ani Energy, Squarespace, Tretorn, Lagunitas Brewing, Newport Storm Rhode Islands Microbrewery and Late July Organic.
ABOUT THE FEST:
The Sasquatch! Music Festival is the largest festival held in the Pacific Northwest, with no future plans of growing. Organizers want to maintain the intimate ambiance that is created in the natural amphitheater by keeping the festival on a smaller-scale. The scene is definitely rustic and creates a communal experience for festivalgoers.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Like many who live in the Pacific Northwest, the audience is best described as laid-back, optimistic and a little off-center. They connect with nature and can be found engaging in outdoors-y activities when not rocking out.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Official sponsors of Sasquatch in the past include, Skype, Bud Light, Jack Daniel’s and several companies local to Washington.
BROOKLYN, NY
Late August (Summer)
25K total attendance
Duration: Two days

ABOUT THE FEST:
The Afro Punk Festival is a unique music experience described by the New York Times as “the most multicultural festival in the US.” According to organizers, the word “Afropunk” itself has become synonymous with open-minded, non-conforming and unconventional, placing the fest at the epicenter of urban culture inspired by music.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
The people here are smart, think boldly and love a good social movement. This audience connects with more artistic sensibilities and tends to be more self-aware than the average consumer. They’re very conscious of the world around them.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Past sponsors and partners include, Red Bull Sound Select, Doc Martens, Nubian Heritage, Yelp, Pantene and Perrier.
ABOUT THE FEST:
The Treefort Music Fest is a homegrown music experience rooted in the Boise community. The event is produced by a passionate staff of unpaid volunteers to immerse the people of Boise in art, entertainment, discussion and culture. Known as a “festival of discovery,” people are encouraged to submit artists to be featured during the fest.

PEOPLE YOU’LL MEET:
Strong-willed and passionate do-gooders. These are the people you want for neighbors. They’re always on the hunt for new experiences, and have a natural curiosity for all things. Individuals within this audience try to do their part to improve the community they care about.

THE COMPANY YOU’D KEEP:
Festival partners in the past include, Alaska Airlines, New Belgium Brewing, Boise State University, Project Filter and countless local companies in the community.
Festival Matrix

Sasquatch!

SMALL

LARGE

DIVERSE

NICHE
Keys to Success

- Focus on Passion Points
- Integrate Your Brand Throughout the Entire Festival Experience
- Provide Some Creature Comforts
- Make It Personal
- Think of Your Festival Experience as an Annual Reunion of the Brand Community
Focus On Passion Points

Don’t show up like you just read an article on Gen Y and music festivals and decided you should get in on the action. You should have a great understanding of what the festival audience is passionate about and not just rely on demographic information.

Show up to the festival exactly how your target audience does – as a genuine fan of the artists performing and the community that they represent.

Align closely with the music. Make direct associations with specific bands and the unique qualities of the festival you’re activating at – not just the general idea of them.

By establishing your brand as an integrated part of the fan community, your activation becomes truly integrated in the experience rather than just another advertisement.

Keys to Success

BEST PRACTICES

WHO DID IT RIGHT?
H&M
WHERE DID THEY DO IT?
Coachella 2012
WHAT HAPPENED?
H&M welcomed festivalgoers with an air-conditioned escape from the heat and a #KissForACause photo area that appealed to socially-driven attendees. Each hashtagged photo earned a $1 donation from H&M to Fashion Against AIDS.

WHO DID IT RIGHT?
Fender
WHERE DID THEY DO IT?
Lollapalooza 2013
WHAT HAPPENED?
Fender created an exclusive pop-up shop giving budding musicians and music fans the opportunity to try and buy Fender guitars and gear, while also taking in live performances in-store.

Photo Credit: Bizbash
Photo Credit: Label Networks
Integrate Your Brand Throughout
The Entire Festival Experience

After researching the specific conditions of your festival and the start-to-finish experience that attendees enjoy, brands should **create ways to integrate themselves into every step.** That means connecting with fans at every point of the experience, **pre-event, during the event and post-event.**

Send out **pre-event packets** with people’s wristbands before the festival, meet your fans at the **airport,** interact with them at their **hotels or lodging areas,** give them opportunities to **share their festival moments on social** and make sure you’re there to **send them back home** with something special as they wrap up their experience.

**WHO DID IT RIGHT?**
UrbanDaddy & Mini Cooper

**WHERE DID THEY DO IT?**
Lollapalooza 2013

**WHAT HAPPENED?**
Influencers, artists and regular festivalgoers reserved a Mini Cooper for their “Mini Night Out,” which entailed of stops at various Lolla after parties around town. The celebrity-style transportation made guests feel like rock stars, even if they weren’t.

**BEST PRACTICES**

Send out **pre-event packets** with people’s wristbands before the festival, meet your fans at the **airport,** interact with them at their **hotels or lodging areas,** give them opportunities to **share their festival moments on social** and make sure you’re there to **send them back home** with something special as they wrap up their experience.

**WHO DID IT RIGHT?**
Chipotle

**WHERE DID THEY DO IT?**
Pitchfork 2014

**WHAT HAPPENED?**
A week prior to the festival, Chipotle sent exclusive email invites to people so they could reserve a spot inside their lounge onsite. During the fest, these VIP attendees could take advantage of free tacos and bottled water, but walk-ins were also welcome.
Keys to Success

Provide Some Creature Comforts

In addition to directly supporting the performers, brands benefit from providing valuable amenities to festivalgoers and by coming up with solutions to many festival pain points.

Figure out how to tie your brand’s attributes and benefits into the experience so that your messaging truly resonates and makes a lasting impression on festivalgoers.

Make sure you have a clear picture of the conditions at your chosen festival so that you can create the most comfortable, fun and ideal festival experience for fans.

WHO DID IT RIGHT?
PayPal
WHERE DID THEY DO IT?
Outside Lands 2014
WHAT HAPPENED?
No one wants to get stuck carrying around heavy backpacks and personal belongings at a festival. Security is paramount to PayPal, so they provided festivalgoers lockers to safely store their stuff so they could get back to the music.

WHO DID IT RIGHT?
Popchips
WHERE DID THEY DO IT?
Pitchfork 2013
WHAT HAPPENED?
Popchips eased attendees’ pain with their “Relief Hut,” where guests could purchase in-demand supplies like mobile phone chargers while learning about Habitat for Humanity, to whom the “hut” was later donated.
Keys to Success

Make It Personal

Festivalgoers are there to make memories.

Plenty of companies hand out swag to fans, only for it to be discarded at home or even onsite at the festival. However, brands can highlight their relevance and unique point-of-view by providing personalized, thoughtful mementos for guests to show off at the festival and beyond.

Encourage personalization that gives fans a chance to engage with your product. Customization creates a huge value proposition that speaks to this audience’s desire to express their individuality. At music festivals, everyone wants to stand out from the crowds.

WHO DID IT RIGHT?
Oreo
WHERE DID THEY DO IT?
SXSW 2014
WHAT HAPPENED?
Through the awesomeness of 3D printing, Oreo created truly trendy snacks with flavors based on trending hashtags on Twitter. Guests waited in line for hours to get a cookie while tweeting to determine their chocolatey destiny.

WHO DID IT RIGHT?
Gap
WHERE DID THEY DO IT?
Sasquatch 2013
WHAT HAPPENED?
Gap amplified the rustic outdoor atmosphere of Sasquatch by featuring a DIY cutoff shorts station, nostalgic games like cornhole and face painting, all while in a relaxed, effortlessly cool tent and seating area.
Keys to Success

Think Of Your Festival Experience As An Annual Reunion Of The Brand Community

The best festival strategies are long-term and engage fans each in a way that is signature to your brand, but continually evolving.

Provided that you already have an active brand community, the festival experience you create is a chance to engage your audience and reward them for their loyalty and participation.

As for the people who weren’t familiar with your brand before your activation, don’t forget to keep in touch – you made all these new friends and you shouldn’t wait an entire year to talk to them again. Give your audience as many opportunities as possible to show their support for your brand onsite and long after they leave the festival grounds.
WANNA JAM WITH US?
LET’S KEEP TALKING.

ABOUT PBJS:
PBJS is family of creative and production talents bonded by strategic thinking and a passion for seeing our clients succeed beyond their expectations. We conceive and execute ideas that stick.

CONTACT:
Lindsay Rowe
lindsay.rowe@pbjs.com
375 Hudson St. 14th Floor
New York, NY 10014
646-500-7673
www.pbjs.com

PBJS Seattle
(206) 694-6000
SEA@pbjs.com

PBJS Chicago
(312) 297-1400
CHI@pbjs.com

PBJS New York
(646) 500-7600
NYC@pbjs.com

PBJS St. Louis
(314) 932-5285
STL@pbjs.com