

IEBA Panel on Entertainment Trends - IAFE 2009

All buyers on the panel reported their event(s) were up over the previous year and attributed this to increased attention to programming. Some even had “record” years.

It was agreed that no matter how hard it may be, you must program up, not down (when economic factors are negative), and book earlier to get the best act possible.

Also, people tend to stay closer to home and spend their money instead of planning extensive vacations, but will say no to local events if not a strong draw.

Be creative and package several “middle range” acts for something unique. Make it a show they have never experienced before.

Get the artists involved, as they will go the extra mile right now. To prove this point, Chuck Wicks related a story about a radio promotion on one of his shows centering around his “Stealing Cinderella” song. The radio listeners were asked to show up at a certain location to try on a “slipper” and the first one whose foot fit in the shoe won tickets to the concert. Imagine what it was like for Chuck to face all those feet until he found a winner – now that is going the extra mile for sure!

There has been a great interest and success in booking “kiddy” or “tweener” acts. Parents tend to spend more on concerts for their children than themselves. Look for up and coming Disney artists on television shows or what your children are listening to and try to get them before they are unattainable.

Everyone on the panel unanimously agreed social networking (facebook, myspace, twitter, etc.) is essential as it lets people get involved on a different level. Since it provides instant feedback, keeps it personal and reaches your specific target market, it remains invaluable as a marketing tool.

Briefly the subject of “360” deals was discussed which entails a record label being involved in all aspects of the artist’s career (360 degrees, from merchandise, to concerts, etc., not just music sales). This has become a potential wave of the future as the record labels struggle to maintain profit with so much music being downloaded virtually for free. Buyers need to be aware of this trend as it becomes more integrated into the entertainment market place.