

Marketing Plan for Black 47

Black 47 is much more than a musical group. They are a **voice for Irish America**. Leader Larry Kirwan is a cross generational icon who has been involved in the Irish Civil Rights Movement, a playwright, novelist, radio broadcaster and someone who is frequently sought out by the media to comment on Irish affairs. Thus when Black 47 comes to town the event can be treated as a highlight in the year's Irish American calendar. Many avenues can be explored for free publicity.

The pub is one of the pivotal hubs of the Irish-American community. **Word of mouth through your local Irish bar is priceless and takes just a little legwork.** Make a list of the main Irish pubs in a fifty-mile radius. The band is willing to supply CDs for each jukebox and posters for windows and bulletin boards. We also have a downloadable flyer that you can customize for your event. These should be printed up in good quantity and made available to all interested parties. A group rate should be offered for parties from individual pubs and band members will make themselves available for **meet and greets and photos** after the event. One enthusiastic pub, close to the event, should be chosen as the "post-party" site and members of the band will show up to mix with the pub's clientele. The band likes to meet its fans and usually announces the location from the stage.

Remember that hiring Black 47 guarantees **very high bar sales** at the event. This will help subsidize the band's performance fee. For obvious reasons, beer companies like being associated with the band and will sometimes give sponsorship cash, but will always provide free product that can be sold, thus upping the bar profit. It is a good idea to solicit Guinness who will provide kegs or cans of draft for sale. However, each area has its own sales manager and if yours is not enthusiastic, then check what brands of beer sell well in your local Irish pubs and solicit their distributors for sponsorship. Having a **local Irish music bar band or singer** to do a 30 minute acoustic support set will help on two scores: the local band will help promote the show on a grass roots level as their chance to play with a high profile national act; a certain section of the audience, however, will spend this time in the bar lobby "finishing" their drinks, thus adding to the bar take.

Black 47 is especially strong in **Catholic colleges and high schools**. These should be posterred and flyerred. Special emphasis should be placed on Gaelic or Irish societies at the schools and a group rate offered.

Although the band itself is interdenominational, Irish-Americans are often the backbone of **local Catholic parishes**. Contact should be made with priests

and nuns of the various surrounding dioceses. Handing flyers out after Sunday mass is a great way to build word of mouth.

The **Ancient Order of Hibernians** (AOH) has chapters throughout the country. A little scouting and you can find your local chapter or Black 47 will help. Inviting the AOH to set up an information table in the lobby can ensure great ground support. Likewise **Irish Northern Aid** – an activist organization – is always looking to expand membership and will get behind Irish events in return for a table.

Since the success of **Riverdance** and **Lord of the Dance** there are few communities in the US that do not have an **Irish Dancing company or school**. Black 47 has always encouraged dancers – both professional and amateur – to join them on stage. No rehearsal is required but an invitation to participate in the show spreads the word in the Irish-American community as the band is especially popular with the younger generation. Photo opportunities after the show will be provided.

If it can be organized Larry Kirwan will give a **reading** from his books and plays or a talk on Irish history, politics or culture before the event at the center, a college, library, or church.

Black 47 will help recruit **street teams** from its **10,000 plus active e-list** for flyering colleges, coffee shops, pubs and other places where young people congregate.

We will have our publicist, **Monica Hopman of Think Press**, get in touch with the local rock press and music writers, and cover newspaper listings. The center's publicist should concentrate on human-interest stories focusing on the band's background in Irish politics and history. Special attention should be paid to local columnists with Irish-American background. Kirwan's memoir, **Green Suede Shoes**, his hosting of a show on **SIRIUS Satellite Radio**, his children of all ages CD, **Keltic Kids**, and his friendships with many writers and celebrities are topics that can be emphasized for stories.

Because of the band's cutting edge attitude Kirwan is an ideal guest for **morning drive time interviews**. He can adapt to the full spectrum of personalities from shock-jocks to NPR commentators.

As the band is a recognizable name to rock and folk disc jockeys, programmers and station managers, local stations should be approached for **event radio sponsorship**. This often costs nothing more than setting up a table with a radio personality eager to boost ratings. As long as it doesn't clash with the center's policy on such matters, the radio person should be

encouraged to introduce the band onstage. In return for this the station will make a public service announcement of the band's concert over a track of Black 47 music and play it for a week before the event. Competition ticket giveaways also help spread the word.

TV stations should be encouraged to come down to the band's sound check and do a short general interest piece for the **early evening news**. Failing that, the band will supply DVDs of their most successful MTV video, Funky Ceili, for "**what's on in town**" segments.

Once the date is confirmed the band will list the event at **www.black47.com** and mention the concert in the **Black 47 newsletter** which goes out roughly every 2-3 weeks to its 10,000 e-list.

Larry Kirwan will make himself available for **all interviews** - from the local college paper or radio station to the main daily newspaper or large commercial radio outlet. No effort will be spared in creating free, tasteful publicity. This is a band that likes to ensure that every concert is a winning proposition for whatever organization that sponsors them. Black 47 takes pride in leaving a residue of good will in the community long after they have moved on to the next event.

