

## **Application for promotional or demo unit – Updated July 2023**

We get a lot of requests for promotional units, and even with the best intentions the fact is that 4 out of 5 units vanish into the ether, never to be seen again, no reviews, no feedback, no usage.

So, realistically, we have to ask ourselves when sending a unit out, is this worth it?

Our manufacturing costs are around 60%, when you add in labour and overheads. That's super high compared to big name companies who operate on 10%, but it's pretty normal for a micro-business. For a £250 HotBox our costs are maybe £150.

Factor in that we send out five units to get one good result and that means we're down £750.

Now, the business actually takes around 20% per unit in real profit.

At £50 profit per unit we need to get fifteen sales to -genuinely- break even on a freebie.

We have no way of knowing which freebies will give us a good result, and everyone who asks is well-intentioned, so the following is how we determine 'good odds'.

### **Reviews and e-promotion.**

If you are intending to review or promote our units but not sell them, read on:

What I'm looking for is a sign of what I call 'seriousness'. That means you are highly active on a number of platforms. I'd expect something like two or more posts a day, consistently, on a fast-moving platform such as Insta, Tik-Tok, Twitt-X, or whatever. Or/and I'd expect roughly weekly posts on a slower-moving platform such as you-tube or, even monthly as a Patreon or on your own blog. Richer content = less frequent of course.

I don't care about subscriber numbers as much as I do consistency. Everyone deserves a chance and we all start small. I don't exclude anyone.

If you have a paper-based publication, again it needs to be something regular and committed to that people can actually find and read. If you have a mailing list, great, we love those, tell me about it. If you have something else, feel free to describe it.

Accordingly, what I want are URL's, platforms, how long you've been going, reach etc. and we'll make a judgement call and (eventually) get back to you with feedback either way.

### **Shops, brick and mortar, e-shops educational.**

As per e-promotion I'm looking for seriousness, reach and consistency.

If you have a brick'n'mortar shop then that's a big deal, and I'll need a photo of your gear in the shop showing where your customers go to try kit out, and of where they pay. I'll also need a photo of your premises, showing your signage and nearby shops. That's usually enough for me, I've been in enough guitar shops to know what's what.

Small is fine. Unit in a shopping complex is fine. Just show off your pride and joy to me :)

If you have a hybrid shop, with e-sales and a website, send us those links too for extra bonus points.

If your shop is by-appointment, or doesn't have signage because it's in a container on an industrial estate, that's not necessarily a deal breaker. Instead I just need to see your website, your e-sales platform links with some history and links to your advertising platforms. Be that organic social media or paid advertising.

I get a lot of 'shops' that are someone starting a business from their bedroom. I love small businesses, I love start-ups, I think that's super-cool, but I gotta admit that's a huge red flag for me. 9 out of 10 shops fail in the first 6 months and if you are still selling from your home, and you can't show a clear sales history and customer base then either you've only just begun learning about business, or there's something wrong with your business model and you aren't selling enough to need business space. I wish you well but I'm probably not going to be able to back that.

## **Don't think you can meet the criteria?**

When it comes to freebies I'm 100% business.

If I don't have confidence in ROI then I'm not doing it, sorry.

My advice to new starters and those trying to grow a business is to get some professional business advice. Pony up the money and buy advice. However, what they'll probably tell you is:

1. Find your audience and spend time becoming their friend. Shop or social media, people all want to feel well-treated and respected. They're sick of being treated like walking wallets.
2. Offer 'value added content'. That means provide great advice, support, interesting information, add a coffee machine to your shop, add a notice board, let users buy small adds on your website for free. Get people involved and show that you have something to offer. Build an audience, one person at a time. I'd rather have one customer I know by name than 100 maybe maybe's.
3. Get realistic about pricing. Do your research on what people actually pay. Stuff is worth what people actually pay, not what they claim they'll pay. Everyone tells me to put my attenuator prices up, but the answer is no, because people can't afford more, even if they think it's worth more.
4. Advertising sucks. Advertising is for billion dollar companies. Spend time on point 1. instead.
5. Commit. Build a great website. Build a great shop. Build a rock-solid posting schedule. It's a job. You choose your hours, choose your tasks, choose your locations, but you must ensure customers know, trust and can predict you. Rent a unit. Pay for a website. You get nothing for nothing.
6. Don't overspend: Paying for most services is a mugs game, they just want your money and will stroke your ego in any way they can to get it. Same goes for making a product. Use what you have, only buy fancy tools out of profit after you restock your parts and pay your bills. Don't build fifty units unless you have fifty customers and fifty deposits.

## **Ready to apply?**

Simply send an email to [sales@audiostorm.uk](mailto:sales@audiostorm.uk) with all your info and photos (please either resize them down, or use links: My server may reject emails over about 3MB). Do also include your name, address, business name, and what item you are hoping to receive, including ohms if appropriate.