1. Company Background

1.1 Overview

Gigfinder.com was purchased in 2007 with hopes that its descriptive name would bring organic traffic to the site. Located online, gigfinder.com has the ability to reach millions and bring artists, disk jockeys and bands together with fans that need their services.

Launched February 1st, 2009, the site began to grow. Today the site has reached 1,035 members as of September 23, 2009. Gigfinder.com aims to match musicians trying to find gigs with people looking to book entertainment for parties, events, weddings and more.

1.2 Management Team

Co-Founders Edward and Larisa Genin solely operate Gigfinder.com from their home. With no music background themselves, the purchased the site in hopes that through a "catchy, descriptive" name they could use their online marketing experience to make gigfinder.com a success. Co-founder, Larisa Genin, is an associate professor at Saint Mary's College of California. She is a faculty advisor for the Saint Mary's College American Marketing Association. Having over ten years of professional experience, Larisa enjoys acquiring descriptive domain names. It is with her knowledgeable background and eagerness to enter the

online market space that gives gigfinder.com such high hopes for success.

1.3 Description of existing products and services

Currently 1,000 members have joined gigfinder.com. As members sign on to the site they are able to create a profile which enables them to connect with fans who need their services. On the other hand fans are able to log on and search for types of bands and artist who will fulfill

their need for entertainment.

Gigfinder.com allows its members to upload pictures, videos, demos and have personal blogs in order to help customers get to know them and their music.

1.4 Identify additional products/services/features not currently offered

Gigfinder.com has a lot going for them being a social network. Expanding on its ability to reach people over the internet, promoting the website would increase popularity and make gigfinder.com a household name. Ads on facebook.com and other popular social networks would increase popularity and create more traffic for the site. Creating an option for venues to come on to the site and advertise for need artists would provide more opportunity and bring together communities with local artists. Creating an image and style for gigfinder.com is the most important place to start. A memorable and simple logo with a catchy motto will get people talking about gigfinder.com. Revising the site to make it easier for new members to navigate and use the site will allow more needs to meet on the site. Such options ad featured bands and new listing would help members find what they need faster.

2. Industry Outlook & Competitive Analysis

2.1 Industry Outlook

Within the last two years the entertainment industry has jumped from $874 billion to $923.9 billion, with the advertising budget reaching $285.1 billion in 2008 (Plunkett). The entertainment industry has continued to show growth, regardless of the downward economic turn. Furthermore, from within the music industry, online music has been emerging as the newest leader in the last 10 years (Mintel). Online music revenues from 2005-08 have projected to be around $7.2 billion. The industry has been furthered estimated to reach $12 billion by 2011. The use of an online music industry will be a constant evolving and innovative market with a bright future.

Within the online music industry, online audio takes the lead with approximately $4.6 billion in 2008. It topples its online video competitor with its $2.6 billion revenue that year. Social networking sites seem to be a new and in demand medium for distributing music. MySpace.com, although not a true competitor to Gigfinder.com, seems to be the leading site for trafficking customers to music sites.

Internet is by far the medium that customers use to find music and communicate with others with musical talents and venues. The most profitable practice for the online industry is the paid downloads. This practice could be offered by Gigfinder.com, allowing them another way to create revenue.

Demographics show a younger male online presence for those who engage with the social networking music sites (Mintel). Slowly however, a more mass audience of all ranging ages and genders and ethnicities are starting to use music networking sites.

Social networking is becoming a quick leader on how people spend their time. Social networks create relationships between people and their content that they share. With an increasing 82% and an average time per person increasing 67% of minutes people spend on social networking and blog sites (Nielsen). Facebook is by no doubt leading the back with 144.3 million users. MySpace is a close second with 116.1 million video streams (Nielson). From May 2008 to May 2009 there has been a 12% increase in social networking sites within the United States, totaling an internet audience of 193,825 (Brian Solis).

Gigfinder.com's website platform is hosted by Ning.com. According to Briansolis.com, the average time spent on Ning is 11:40mins, 5 visits per visitor. Their audience is 59% female and 41% male. The highest percentage, 25%, of people using or visiting Ning are between the ages of 35-44. 34% of Ning's traffic has a household income of $25,000-$49,000; we can assume that some of Gigfinder.com's traffic can come from part of Ning's traffic.

MySpace's music/bands section is possible traffic that Gigfinder would like to attract. The highest indexing demographics for MySpace was people aged 18 to 24 and 12 to 17 (Nielsen).

Social networks have shown little to no evidence of slowing down growth. Mashable.com forecasts, "[that] by 2013, an estimated 52% of Internet users will be regular social network visitors". 79.5 million (41%) of the US Internet user population visited social network sites at lease once a month in 2008, an 11% increase over the visits in 2007. EMarketer found that 62.8 million of the US online social network users were people over the age of 18. By 2013, they predict that it will increase to 93.9 million, a 49.5% increase.

2.2 Competitive Analysis

Gigfinder.com, although only launched in February 2009, has some minor competition. Direct competition would be BandsOfTheBay.com because they are local; however websites such as RentMyBand.com, GigMasters.com, and BandMix.com compete with Gigfinder.com nationally.

2.2a BandsOfTheBay.com

Bands Of The Bay specifically targets the San Francisco Bay Area music scene. This company would most likely be the largest local competitor for Gigfinder.com. Gigfinder.com is based out of the East Bay, so the easiest potential target market to tap into would be where Bands Of The Bay is already dominating.

2.2b RentMyBand.com, GigMasters.com, BandMix.com

All three of these bands, Rent My Band, GigMasters, Band Mix, have music talents and venues that reach over the continental United States. They would be the top competitors for Gigfinder.com nationally.

2.2c Top Competitors

The top competitors for Gigfinder.com would be RentMyBand.com, GigMasters.com, BandMix.com, and BandsOfTheBay.com. Geography, the competitors could differ from where and who Gigfinder is currently targeting, but areas where they wish to excel and start to build a larger member database for.

Rent My Band

Founded in 2004, two musicians wanted to find an inexpensive way to find better paying gigs. They market to bands and musicians throughout the United States. However, to have access to the network connections that they have, the prospective client has to become a member. Although Gigfinder.com encourages visitors to become members, they have access to most of the resources (forums, members pages) where as visitors to RentMyBand.com do not.

GigMasters

GigMasters offers the ability to search specific bands, musicians, or venues to their customers. They allow their customers to rate each GigMaster performer which guarantees success of the performance. The site has a nationwide database of every conceivable genre of performer, whereas Gigfinder has a smaller list. In addition to connecting the band/ musician to an event, the company books their gig online. This convenience for their customer allows them to pay on the spot to ensure that the performer is theirs for the event.

BandMix

"Connecting Musicians all over the United States" Having a motto is a challenge that Gigfinder needs to address. The 2003 site offers thousands of profiles of musicians searching for bands to participate in.

Bands of The Bay

Like Gigfinder, bandsofthebay.com is completely free to its customers. However, the have a partner site (earBuzz.com) which their customers can subsribe to for $5/month, This allows them to sell their songs and CDs on their profile page. Although Gigfinder does not have this asset, it could be a potential revenue stream. They describe their demographic as "local, young and music hungry". They also have a music store where fans can purchase music from

their favorite artists. They have a specific target market of nightclubs, bars, bookstores, coffeehouses, restaurants and stadiums.

2.2d Companies Advantages

Gigfinder can market not only in the United States but they can potential have clients internationally as well. This gives Gigfinder a niche market, because none of their competitors have reached the international market yet.

Most of Gigfinder's competitors have a search option, which makes the navigation of the site much easier for its users. As seen above, all of their competitors have attractive logos, something that Gigfinder needs. Not necessarily an asset, but all of Gigfinder's competitors have been in the "gig finding business" since the early 2000s, where as Gigfinder launched early this year.

3. Market Segmentation Strategy & Target Market

3.1 Current Target Markets

Gigfinder.com's first and foremost goal is establishing a larger member presence on the online social networking site while doing so "organically". The largest target market that Gigfinder must focus on is their customers, mostly musicians, who create the actual profiles on the site. The musicians are there, primarily, to find gigs and that's their main priority. Musicians, bands, djs, and entertainers are plainly stated in their tag line on the website. Within the target market of musicians, there are more specific type of musicians that might find Gigfinder of interest. Gigfinder has designed their profile set up to begin market segmentation. Guitarists, drummers, keyboardist, bassists, vocalists, saxophonists, composers, song writers, producers, lyricist, djs, dancers, models, photographers, agents, managers, artists, actors, makeup artists, hair stylists, trainers, tutors, or employers are all targets from the beginning when the person is asked to become a member to the site. Besides what type of musician you are, people are categorized by what type of instruments they can play. Whether the person can play the accordion, acoustin guitar, bagpipe, banjo, bass, bass guitar, bassoon, bouzouki, cello, clarinet, drums, fiddler flute, flute, guitar, harmonica, harp, harpsichord, keyboard, keys, lap steel, mandolin, oboe, organ, pedal steel, percussion, piano, piccolo, saxophone, sitar, steel drum,

string bass, synthesizer, trombone, trumpet, tuba, viola, violin, they are all smaller current target markers that Gigfinder hopes to get as members. Another way that Gigfinder separates their target market is by what kind of genre the member is interested in.

The different options for customizing one's genre are 20's hits, 30's hits, 40's hits, 50's hits, 60's hits, 70's hits, 80's hits, 90's hits, acapella, acid, acoustic, Africian, laternative, background music, big band, bluegrass, blues, Brazilian, Broadway, cabaret, Cajun, calypso, Caribbean, Celtic, chamber music, children's songs, Christian, classic rock, classical, cocktail lounge style, contemporary, country, country classic, country new, dance, death metal & trash, disco, do wop, easy listening, electronic, ethnic, flamenco, folk, French, funk, fusion, German, gospel, Greek, groove, grunge, hard core, hard rock and metal, Hawaiian, heavy metal, hip hop, industrial, Irish, Italian, jam, jazz, jazz contemporary, jazz fusion, jazz latin, Klezmer, Latin, mariachi, meditative, meringue, metal, Motown, Native American, new age, new music forms, oldies, opera, polka, pop, progressive rock, psychedelic, punk, R&B, ragtime, reggae, rock, rock & roll, Russian, salsa, ska, soul, swing, techno, top 40, variety, wedding, world music, and zydeco. Each of these subcategorizes allows for a smaller target market to emerge for Gigfinder.

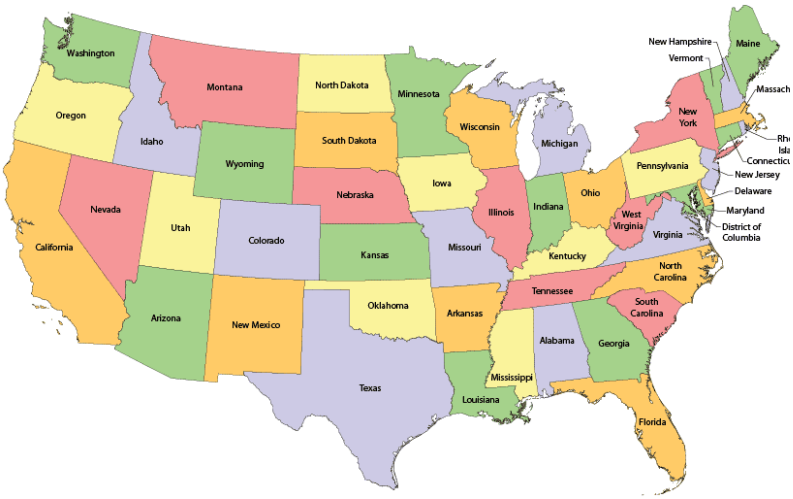
The second largest target market would be the venues that would host the musicians. Based on a study in 2009, 25% of small businesses stated that they would increase spending on the medium this year (mashable.com). Small restaurants and venues are two different markets that are being targeted on the site. This is more of a smaller market for Gigfinder, but it needs to be enlarged so that the website can be true to its name. Spending more time targeting smaller restaurants, cafes, venues, and concerts might be a starting spot for Gigfinder to get its word out.

Currently on the site, there seems to be a high presence of musicians looking for bands or partnerships with other members. This creates an opening for another target market of musicians seeking bands or groups.

Gigfinder has established smaller target markets within the site for their members. There is a smaller presence on the site of recording studios hoping to find musicians who are willing to spend money and invest in recording. Production companies are also on the social networking site, hoping to find musicians who are ready to record and who need help with the

production and set ups of tracks and CDs. Event planning agencies are also present on the site. These agencies set up gigs with a list of entertainers ready and available.

The demographics for Gigfinder's members seem to be quite random in regards to occupation, education, household size and family lifestyle. There seem to be slightly more males than females for members based on the member's profiles. We assume that their income is probably in the middle to lower end of middle class. Most of the members seem to be struggling musicians looking to expand their portfolio of events and showcase their talent. There also might be a slight some well off people who are just looking for gigs to do as a side job because they enjoy playing music. The ages also vary; there are some members who seem to be in their teens or early 20s, some in the mid 20s, 30s, and a few on the older spectrum.



The Geographics seem pretty sporadic in regards to the locations of the members and where they are willing to find gigs. The range of the members seems to be kept within the United States, however, but not limited to only a few states.

In regards to psychographics, most of the members probably value passion and a hard work ethic. They might have steady jobs or part time jobs to make ends meet; it would depend on how dependent they want to be on their music. They most likely spend longer amounts of time focused on their music or talent.

3.2 Identify Potential Market Segments to be Targeted

Since there are opportunities to possibly advertise or be featured on myspace.com, there is a specific target market that Gigfinder would be looking to target. The largest market for myspace is teenagers from the age 0-14, making up 34% of their membership base. There is a fairly large percentage of females (64%) that spend their time on myspace compared to their 36% male counterparts (Briansolis.com). This would open up to a larger and more varied membership base as well as trying to induce more females to Gigfinder.

Gigfinder uses Ning.com as their platform which allows for other potential markets to be targets. The average age of people who use Ning is 35-44, making up 25% of the total market for the social networking site. Again for the site, females dominate with a 59% over the 41% males. Ning has over 5.6 million visitors solely within the United States (Briansolis.com). This would hopefully bring in more of the middle aged group to Gigfiner. The people who use Ning might be looking to host events or to find musicians to perform, which would help Gigfinder expand their venue membership base.

Gigfinder has members who are writers, producers, photographers, artists, actors, models, dancers, and theatre, which are their smallest markets. If focused more on the musicians and the

venues, once Gigfinder has grown, there might be a possibility to spend more time to focus on these smaller niches.

4. Website Assessment

4.1. Goals & Objectives

Gigfinder.com's goal is to provide music artists with a medium to find musical gig and show opportunities. It also wants to connect venues with artists so that they may find musical talent to play their shows.

4.2. Website Assessment & Current Online Initiatives

4.2.1. Graphic Design and Aesthetics

Gigfinder's opening page does not immediately catch the viewer's attention. The dark colors of the background and borders especially make the front page seem dull and uninviting. The site's main banner is very plain and graphically as well as aesthetically uninteresting; since this is the first thing viewers will see, it should certainly be more vibrant and eye-catching. Once the page fully loads, one of the first sections of the page that can is seen is a "members" section that contains 30-40 small color thumbnail pictures; this may be the one section the viewer will look too first because of the vibrant colors of the images.

Gigfinder's website looks pretty much

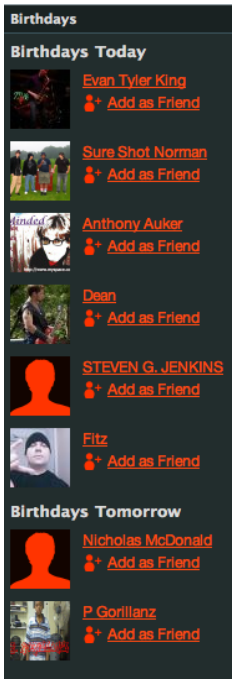
just like it's home page. It has a faint grey blue background and a dominant dark green background on the individual sections. The dark green background definitely dominates the entire site making it seem congested and crammed. A better use of color would involve a lighter background. This will provide a better foundation to make the important materials of the site more noticeable and prominent. It will also help reduce the congested feeling.

Cramming also takes an effect on some of the horizontal spacing. For example, there should be more space between the menu bar and the first sections of the home page; this will show the viewer more clearly the navigation options of the site.

4.2.2. User Friendly Website?

Gigfinder's website can be user friendly to an extent; the menu bar presents the different options correctly making it easy to find the section you want. However, the sections within themselves have to be reorganized. For example, the "gigs" section of the page is merged with the "discussion forum" section. Considering that finding gigs is the main purpose of the site, it would be appropriate for "gigs" to have its own section that can be searched in categories.

One negative of the site is that you have to sign up to browse any other page other than the home page; It would be better to be able to look around without having to signing up. A lot of people may see that you have to sign up to browse the site and may steer away from it. This creates an advantage for competing sites that do not requires sign up for browsing.



There is no search option on the site's home page making it harder for viewers to find specifically what they need. Some sections (especially on the

main page) do not have to be included in the site. For example, there is a section in the middle portion of the page on the right side that displays birthdays of the site's members; this is an unnecessary section to have and should be replaced or taken to relieve cramming.

4.2.3. Keyword Phrases

	QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.	QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.	QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.	QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.
Find Band Gigs	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25
Booking Music Shows	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25
Music Gigs	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25
Find Local Venues	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25
Music Artists	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25	Over 25

4.2.4 Online Advertising, Sales Promotion & Public Relations

Gigfinder does not employ online advertising, sales promotion or public relations at this time. They should however incorporate all three of these methods as soon as the amount of hits on the website continues to grow. Once Gigfinder has revenues coming in they should take advantage of advertising, sales promotion and public relations.

4.2.5 Membership & Community Facilities

Gigfinder currently does not have any membership or community facilities. It would improve their marketing efforts if they had a community facility to have events at and give artists gigs to play at. By doing so, Gigfinder would build

relationships with their customers and their customers would want to continue to work with them by using their site to find more gigs.

4.2.6 Newsletter, Newsgroups & Chats

Gigfinder offers online chats between members of the site. This can be useful because the message is delivered instantly and if you have a question, it can be answered quickly. Gigfinder should do a newsletter or have a way to communication with their customers about new features on their websites, new events or recaps of events and promotions. The chats and newsletter could also be a great way for members and venues talk about bands or for bands to talk between themselves about which venues are good.

4.2.7. Audio & Video Components

Giving members the ability to upload audio and video onto the site could be one of the biggest ways to add value to Gigfinder.com. The site already gives artists the option to upload video and they link the videos to the artist's personal page. This is very important because it allows venues to watch the videos and see how different artists perform live; the venue can then make a more educated decision on who they want to hire to play their shows.

Although Gigfinder claims to give its members the ability to upload their songs or audio clips onto their individual pages, it seems to be difficult to figure out. An audio component directly on the artist's page would add a lot of value to the site because it would give both venues and other members the opportunity to listen to the band's music. This would also benefit the

artists because they would be able to not only search for gigs on the site, but showcase their music too.

4.2.8. Content Strategy Recommendations

There are many things that can be added to boost Gigfinder's value and productivity. One section that can be added to the home page specifically is a "What's Hot" Section, showing and providing a direct link to the top 10 artists, songs and videos. It would also be good to add a section that shows what venues are currently searching for musical artists to play a gig. This way, artists would know exactly where to look in order to find a venue in need of performers.

Another important feature to improve on is the site's artist search system. It would be very beneficial to categorize all of the artists into genre and city. This would make it far easier for venues and members to find the type of artists they are looking for and also artists that are in the same area as them.

Finally, adding a profile distinction to the site would help Gigfinder tremendously. This means asking a user to define him/herself as either an artist, a fan, or a venue. This distinction will make clear for what purpose each user is using Gigfinder. With this feature on the site, it would also leave room for modifications to users' individual pages based on their needs. Therefore, the artist, fan, and venue page set-ups would each be different depending on what is most useful to each profile type.

4.2.9. Developing Pages in Other languages

For now, Gigfinder should not develop pages in other languages. Gigfinder needs to establish itself in the United States before they expand to other countries. It is not worth all the

time and effort that would be needed to go into the translations. Ultimately, Gigfinder would also have an unnecessary risk of improper translation.

4.3 New Online/Website-Related Strategies

To get more people to register to the site, Gigfinder should make certain features on the site exclusively available to registered users. This would mean making more of the site available to unregistered guests so that there is exclusivity between them and the site's members. Examples of exclusive features could be an email notification on gig opportunities or chances for your band to be featured on Gigfinder's home page.

5. Business-to-Business Marketing: Strategic Alliances and Partnerships

The goal of Gigfinder.com is to be the ultimate place "to post and find gigs for musicians, bands, djs and entertainers". We have come up with several companies and organizations that Gigfinder could potentially align with and form a strategic partnership. Those companies are: Facebook.com, Myspace.com, Twitter.com, Youtube.com, the Vans Warped Tour, and the Red House in Walnut Creek, CA.

1. **Facebook.com**

   Facebook.com is the most used social networking site in the world with over 300 million users worldwide, according to a 2009 Compete.com survey. That statistic alone pretty much explains why Facebook would be a great strategic alliance for any company. Facebook.com allows users to create a personal profile and post pictures and information as well as update their statuses throughout the day. Users can add friends to view their profiles and post messages on each other's profiles. Facebook users can also join and create different groups which may be of interest to them and petition their friends to join as well. The exposure that Facebook would bring to Gigfinder.com is tremendous. It would be a great alliance for Gigfinder.com because of its access to so many people and its ability to create groups which cater to users specific interests, which in this case would be music. A great marketing strategy for Gigfinder would be to create a group and request members to join the group based on their interest in music. Gigfinder would also have a personal page of their own where someone must be in charge of requesting friends and updating status with new available gigs and artists. Members of the Facebook group could also connect with one another and talk directly to each other via Gigfinder's page.

Gigfinder should also have a link on their website saying “Join us on Facebook”. A vivid presence on Facebook is bound to gain exposure for any new company or organization.

2. **Myspace.com**

Myspace.com was recently bumped out of the number one spot as the most used social networking site by Facebook.com. However, Myspace continues to be one of the most popular social networking sites worldwide. Myspace works very similarly to Facebook, where users can create their own personal profile pages and share pictures and other information with others. However, Myspace has a special feature differentiating it from Facebook. Myspace Music, which caters to musicians who can create profiles based around their music to showcase their talents, has become a huge success in helping discover talented artists such as Sean Kingston and Lily Allen. These artists tend to gain popularity through the friends they have and the fans they obtain. As a strategic alliance and partnership, Gigfinder would take a different approach with Myspace, specifically targeting the Myspace Music site and putting emphasis on helping its members find gigs to showcase their talents rather than online fans. Myspace Music would have a link to Gigfinder on their site and could use Gigfinder to help its artists find gigs in their area. Myspace would take care of showcasing artists and bands and their talents, while Gigfinder would focus on finding gigs for these bands to play at. The two would go hand in hand and could develop an extremely profitable partnership.

3. **YouTube.com**

YouTube.com is another one of the most visited websites in the country. YouTube is a video sharing website which allows users to upload and share videos with the world. Videos gain popularity through the number of "hits" they receive, or how many people view the video. Anyone can view YouTube videos, however, some videos are only able to be viewed by registered members. A great way for Gigfinder to align with YouTube would be to feature a "Gigfinder channel" on YouTube which streams videos uploaded by members of Gigfinder.com. This would be another way for people and venues looking for gigs to preview artists and bands before they book them. Although Gigfinder currently does allow members to upload videos, these videos are only viewable on Gigfinder.com. When members sign up on Gigfinder and upload videos, they could be asked if they would like their video to be viewed on the Gigfinder channel on YouTube as well. Putting videos on YouTube, one of the most visited sites, would definitely gain exposure not only for the band or artist, but for Gigfinder as well. Both Gigfinder and YouTube would have links to each other's sites. Prospective bands, artists and venues may even stumble across Gigfinder.com while uploading or searching for videos on YouTube.

4. Twitter.com

Twitter.com, has quickly become one of the top social networking sites in the country right along with Facebook and Myspace. What makes Twitter different is its ability to allow members to constantly and frequently update their statuses. Twitter users are constantly answering the question, "What are you doing?" Members of Twitter obtain "followers", or people who want to be informed when whomever they are following

updates his or her status. For Gigfinder, Twitter would work as a way to constantly post and update gigs or venues looking for gigs. Followers of Gigfinder would be instantly notified when Gigfinder posts a new gig. Gigfinder would have a link on their website, as many sites do, saying “Follow us on Twitter”. Followers, once registered on Twitter, would then be notified every time a new gig or artist is posted on Gigfinder.com. Like Facebook and Myspace, Twitter is another way to expand Gigfinder’s online presence.

5. Vans Warped Tour

The Vans Warped Tour is an all-day music and sporting event that usually takes place once a year around the country. The event is often held in large fields or parking lots, and sports often include skateboarding and BMX/motocross. The Warped Tour is known for hosting up and coming artists and bands usually within the punk rock music category, however, that category is widely expanding. The Tour has featured well-known bands such as Blink-182, Sum 41, Good Charlotte and Fall Out Boy. The Warped Tours encompass everything Gigfinder is trying to do: gain exposure for unknown artists and bands. It would be great exposure for Gigfinder to team up with the Warped Tour and create an alliance with them, encouraging the Tour to use the Gigfinder site to find bands for the event. The Warped Tour could have an exclusive deal with Gigfinder using the website to find bands for its next tour. The Warped Tour would be great proof that Gigfinder’s services are real and that the website really does work. It would be another great way for Gigfinder to gain popularity.

6. **Red House – Walnut Creek, CA**

Red House in Walnut Creek caters to a musician's every need. Red House offers music lessons, recording services, band workshops, rehearsal studios and weekly shows all in one place. The venue caters to young, up and coming bands and artists in the genres of original rock, metal and indie music. What makes Red House really special is the fact that unlike many other similar venues, Red House is an all ages venue. It is important for Gigfinder to not limit itself to the over 21 crowd. Red House would be a great strategic alliance for Gigfinder's local, bay area exposure. Both Gigfinder and Red House could have links on each other's websites. Red House would be a featured venue on Gigfinder's site with dates posted and information updated daily. Red House could even designate one night a week or month for artists and bands exclusively found on Gigfinder.com, and offer special perks to performers found on Gigfinder which would encourage the use of both the website and the venue.

Facebook.com, Myspace.com, YouTube.com and Twitter.com are among the top visited websites in the country. These websites aren't just for casual socializing. Businesses everywhere are teaming up with these websites to help gain exposure for their company and to be more accessible to their clients. You will notice that many businesses and organizations have links to these popular websites on their own websites, encouraging those interested to befriend or follow them. These social networking and sharing sites are really all about networking and gaining exposure, and Gigfinder's presence on these sites is bound to improve Gigfinder's popularity.

Not to mention, because Gigfinder is an online company, it is extremely important for them to have a vivid online presence. Although Facebook, Myspace, YouTube and Twitter are great for Gigfinder's online presence, the Vans Warped Tour and Red House in Walnut Creek, CA are a great start for Gigfinder's local and tangible presence. By teaming up with the Warped Tour and Red House, this allows people to see Gigfinder in action. If a band found on Gigfinder.com were to perform at the Warped Tour or at Red House, people could see that Gigfinder is real and that it does actually work. We think these six companies and organizations would all contribute tremendously to Gigfinder's popularity and lead the company on its way to the top.

6. Strategic Marketing Plan

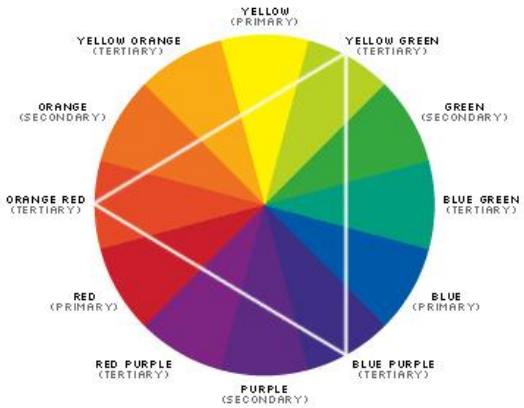
6.1 Company's Message

The current brand name (the company name) is fitting for the service it is aiming to provide; from reading the site's name, it can be easily guessed that the site provides a means for people to find shows/gigs to play or possibly to attend. It is safe to say that people will not assume it is a job finding site because most people associate the term "gig" to a musical show, performance, or act.

The company currently does not have a logo or any symbol to recognize it by. Now, since it is competing for attention both in the fields of networking and music, it is an important thing to have. Many different approaches can be taken in making the company's logo. One approach is making the logo relate somewhat to the industry or service. For example, maybe using two treble clefs from musical notation to form the "G" and "F" from the name. This will show the site's users that the site is clearly meant for musicians. However, it might be best for the company to go with the approach of having a symbol. People generally tend to latch onto pictures more than words so perhaps a simple image (logo) will give the company more recognition in the industry. This way, people will notice the symbol as a whole and automatically refer it to GigFinder. It is more effective because it also does not make the target audience read every time they see the logo.

GigFinder's current slogan/motto on the main page of the site is: "post and find gigs." The company has the right idea in terms of length; it should be short and simple for people to remember. The current slogan could work because it comes straight to the point of what the site is about. Other slogans that could work are: "the alternative to booking agents" or "the easy way to find gigs." These options showcases the site's reliability and the site's productivity.

The company's color scheme should certainly lean more towards colors that promote comfort or reliability. This message will draw more musicians towards the site because of the common difficulties involved in finding gigs; musician will take comfort in and trust a site that makes it easier for them to find places to play and showcase their music to fans especially because it is general a difficult and stressful process. The first color that comes to mind would be Blue because it demonstrates trust and security. However, other networking companies such as Facebook and Myspace are already using these colors intensively and GigFinder should try to use different colors to separate it self from these person to person networking sites. The best color option would probably involve Brown because it will show the site's reliability and comfort to it's users. Reliability is an important trait to show in the company especially because its target clients work in an industry that is always unpredictable and fluctuating. They of all people will most likely to latch onto a service they know is reliable.



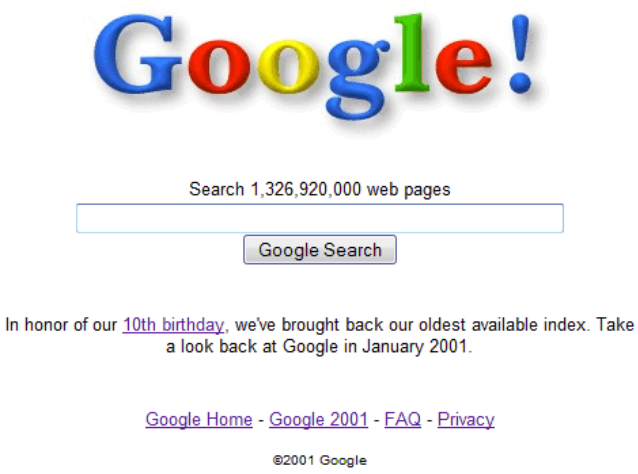
6.2 Marketing Strategy: Goals and Objectives

The goal of Gigfinder.com is to become the ultimate place "to post and find gigs for musicians, bands, djs and entertainers". It is the main objective of Gigfinder.com to connect people with one another and help artists and entertainers find gigs. Most importantly, Gigfinder needs to develop a marketing strategy that keeps members coming back to the site both seeking and posting gigs. That means creating an interactive website and allowing users of all ages to communicate with one another. The website needs to be updated frequently and the content must be monitored. Gigfinder.com also needs to team up with appropriate companies and develop meaningful relationships and partnerships with those companies. Because Gigfinder is an online company, and very much aiming to be a major social networking site, it is even more crucial that they expand their online presence and make themselves more visible on social networking sites such as Facebook, Myspace and Twitter. Aligning with organizations like the Vans Warped Tour and local clubs is also a great way for Gigfinder to expand their popularity giving them a physical presence. With that said, online presence is going to be the key to success for Gigfinder.com and the website can become the top social networking site for music and entertainment.

6.3 Marketing Vehicles and Promotional Techniques

6.3.1 Search Engine Optimization Strategy

Since Gigfinder.com is such a strong domain name, a lot of the searches by potential customers is done without much effort needed. However, to help define people's searches, Gigfinder currently has keywords: bands, musicians, guitarists, drummers, singers, djs, dancers, photographers, gigs, and entertainers.



When searched in Google, Gigfinder does not appear on the first five pages for any of the keywords. One of the challenges could be finding funding to pay Google to have Gigfinder appear on the pages based on these specific search engine keywords. To help increase location for keywords within the search, new and more keywords can be created.

To stick to Gigfinder's niche of the market, eliminating the keywords: "dancers" and "photographers" would be beneficial to sending potential markets to the site. Investing some money to make these keywords stronger to direct more people to the site would greatly benefit the traffic flow. "Music gigs", "entertainment" "music finder" "musicians bands for gigs" "performance" "musical venue" "finding gigs" "finding musicians" would be possible keywords to help strengthen Gigfinder's presence in search engines.

Gigfinder's competitor "GigMasters.com" was found within the first five pages for both bands and guitarists. This is probably due to the funding that GigMasters is sending to Google to get their site more well known and seen.

6.3.2 Social Media Strategy

Gigfinder.com is currently a potential social media strategy because it encourages interaction between its members. However, based on Alexa.com the site is ranked roughly 1.1 millionth and has only been linked 40 times. Having a RSS feed from the site could be potential to bloggers. Contacting music bloggers could help attract more traffic, as well as having Facebook and twitter accounts. However, the downside would be having man power to constantly monitor, maintain, and update the sites.

Gigfinder.com does allow photo and images to be uploaded with approval, so this does help social interaction to some extent. A live chat is also available for members that are visiting the site at the same time.

6.3.3 Advertising

Currently, Gigfinder has not spent money on advertising. Banner ads on Google, would be beneficial to targeting potential markets. Other music sites, such as, Pure Volume, would be a potential place to advertise. Online music magazines would also help create awareness for the site. Banner ads on myspace.com in the music section, would encourage traffic to Gigfinder by musician or even fans.

6.3.4 Direct Marketing

Email blasts to members could encourage more interaction activity on the site. Research and surveys could be done for what the customers are looking for from the site – this allows for continuous improvement. Updates could be announced about new venues that are looking for musicians, or paid ads within an email newsletter by bands looking for musicians.

6.3.5 Public Relations

Emailing smaller online magazines could possibly help with a stronger public relations. It would give the magazines something to write about, as well as help attract musical talent in the local area. Reaching out to members to promote in their hometown as well as promote Gigfinder at the actual events. Having a "news" section would help get more members recognized, as well as allow for opportunities for Gigfinder to reach out to the surrounding communities. Finding bloggers and keeping an active twitter would strengthen a positive image for Gigfinder.

Having a sponsorship at local music venues would also be productive for Gigfinder. Van's Warped Tour or Battle of the Bands, are possible opportunities of events for Gigfinder to sponsor and create awareness of their site.

6.3.6 Sales Promotions

Gigfinder could co-sponsor contests or giveaways by posting them on their site on behalf of venues. Co-sponsoring allows for a strong partnership with venues as well as encourages Gigfinder membership interaction for a contest/giveaway. Different concert venues or musically relative events would be a great place for Gigfinder.com to start.

These types of events would be a great place to spread Gigfinder.com's name out there. Sporting event would be another excellent place to alliance Gigfinder.com's name and logo with. Almost all sporting events need performing and they could begin to find bands or artists through the website.

6.4 Revenue Streams

At this time, Gigfinder does not have any revenue streams.

Gigfinder should start out by considering using Google Ads. It is a fast and easy way to display relevant Google ads on your website and earn money. The only negative about Google ads is that it will cost Gigfinder money to use them through Ning. Gigfinder will have to make sure that they will be able to offset Ning's cost where they are still making a profit and not losing money.

Sell ad space on your website which will target the advertisements to the right visitors and generate more revenue for Gigfinder. You generate revenue based on a per-click basis or the cost-per-thousand. The company you chose to do the ads through will collect all the payments on your behalf and ensure a timely and accurate payment to Gigfinder. Myspace ads can also be a good place to advertise. Their ads are based on strategic marketing and Gigfinder's ads can only appear on the myspace music pages.

Another way Gigfinder can generate revenue is by setting up premium services that the site offers. For example, have a directory for musicians and you charge costumers a listing fee to have their name appear on the directory.

7. Pricing Strategies

7.1. Existing Pricing Strategy

Gigfinder.com is currently not charging customers to use it's website. Therefore, this should be having an affect on GigFinder that is similar or the same to that of a company that has implemented a penetration pricing strategy. By not charging customers to use the site, the company should be able to attract more customers, thereby moving from the unknown newcomer stage to the "brand-recognition" stage or even to the "brand-preference" stage.

7.2. Recommended Pricing Strategies

Gigfinder.com is on the right path in terms of their pricing strategy so far. Since the site has only just now passed the 1,000 members mark, it is recommended that it keep its site free to all members until the site receives more traffic and recognition. Once Gigfinder.com has reached a high point in the recognition stage or has reached the preference stage, the company should start to implement a product-line pricing strategy. At this point there will be enough people that know about the site and who will be willing to pay for its service.

Gigfinder.com should then divide its service into 3 different account options to present to its users. These options would be a basic account, a pro account, and an ultimate account. The basic account would be free to all users but would only provide simple services such as being able to network with bands and venues. The pro account would be the first option that requires a monthly or annual payment. This account would give users more site capabilities; for example: it could offer increased user profile customization as well as the option to receive Gigfinder.com

e-mail updates from users' favorite artists and venues. Finally, the ultimate account would provide members with all of the benefits included in the pro account along with new additions only available to ultimate account members. Although the ultimate account would cost the most, it would give members every service that Gigfinder.com has to offer. By implementing this pricing strategy, Gigfinder.com would give its members the option to choose which type of account would suit them the best depending on what they need.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

1. Gigfinder.com is a very common web domain name, which attracts potential customers organically. The company does not have to put much, if not any, money into growing the brand name, because it is easily searchable on the web.

2. Website is free so there is no reason for members not to join. Offering Gigfinder's services for free, encourages people to have a membership and thus engage in the site.

3. Open to the entire United States; will reach out to a lot of people. By having a national reach, members are not subjected to having to search for an agent within their area.

4. Site is starting to build a strong network within, which will lead to a more development social media website.

Weaknesses:

1. Site has a lot of search options, might make it hard for members to connect with other members. Since there are a lot of options for types of artists, instruments played, possible venues, that it makes it difficult for members to search for what they are looking for.

2. Have not invested in advertising so finding gigfinder.com has been difficult for potential customers. Options like

paying for ads on Google, could enhance the search ability for Gigfinder.

3. There are no fixed employs to regulate and maintain the site, so chances for potential customers and enlarging the target market have been compromised.

4. Because there are offering the service for free, it will be difficult to find sustainable revenue options for the company. This could limit the potential that the sight can reach.

Opportunities:

1. Invest in Google ads and promote website to build brand name strength. There are other venues, like bloggers that could help spread awareness of the company.

2. Lots of venues that would be willing to build alliances with gigfinder.com. Having Gigfinder, eliminates the middleman of having to work for an agency.

3. Provide free service to connect bands and artists with those in need of their service if site can be better organized. People are always willing to join sites, even if they haven't heard much about it, if it is of no cost to them.

4. Redesign website to make easier to use and create a more loyal member base. Constantly making the site simpler for customers, would attract more customers.

Threats:

1. Lots of people in the field that have more recognizable name brands. A lot of competitors have already penetrated the music market, making it harder for Gigfinder to make a name for themselves.

2. Hard to attract more well known bands already associated with record labels that arrange gigs for them. Larger and better known bands and venues use other ways to get gigs.

3. By using Ning, the site is limited to the options it has, could prevent from more successful web design.

4. Competitors have already penetrated areas of the market, which allows them to be the leaders in the niche market.

8.2 Recommendations/Strategies

8.2a 20 Recommendations/Strategies

Market Penetration

1) Keeping the site updated with new information

2) Sponsor events for members

3) Offer more profile customization

4) Offer discounts and or promotions if Gigfinder starts offering more customization/expertise help

5) Create an exclusive mailing list and email new information to current members

Market Development

1) Advertising on web sites that would complement Gigfinder

2) Sponsor events/have Gigfinder represented at different musical events/concerts (booth)

3) Advertise in prominent music magazines (AP, Guitar World, Revolver etc.)

4) Create a strategic alliance with Myspace and Facebook

5) Create a strategic alliance with a local club for musicians

Product/Service Development

1) Create a search portion to the site that allows bands to search for venues that meet their criteria (an advanced search even). Make the same search available to venues searching for artists.

2) Make a chart available for users to see stats on both venues and bands; the venues' charts will have the numbers of people who attended their past and most recent shows. The artists' charts will show ratings and crowd responses on them from past and recent shows they've played. Crowd draw can be included if the information is available.

3) Create a "Top Artists" and "Top Venues" section that can be specified by a search system.

4) Create a “Featured Artist” section which changes weekly to spotlight different artists or groups

5) Organize the site so that it is easier to navigate

Diversification

1) Make an option for fans to sign up to gig finder (limiting what they can see from the artists' profiles)

2) Invest in ways for Gigfinder.com to have an application put on Facebook

3) Eventually, make a way for A&R or Producers to contact artists through Gigfinder.com

4) Reach out to local clubs for musicians in different bay area locations

5) Be sure that Gigfinder is friendly to all different genres of music

8.2b Top 5 Recommendations/Strategies

Pros/Cons

1) Keep the site updated with new information

Pros: Site is always current and up to date.

-Members can rely on current information.

Cons: None

2) Offer more profile customization

Pros: Members can personalize their profiles and cater to their personal interests.

-Members can differentiate themselves from others.

Cons: If not made clear, could cause some confusion.

-Could clutter profiles.

3) Advertising on websites that would complement Gigfinder

Pros: Create exposure for Gigfinder, add to the site's popularity.

Cons: If not done properly, could cause more popularity for the site Gigfinder is being advertised on rather than Gigfinder itself.

4) Create a search portion to the site that allows bands to search for venues that meet their criteria (an advanced search even). Make the same search available to venues searching for artists.

Pros: Allows members to find what they are looking for more quickly.

Cons: Must make sure that the search is thorough or it could leave out some venues.

5) Reach out to local clubs for musicians in different bay area locations

Pros: Create exposure for Gigfinder.

Cons: If not careful, that exposure could stay local and never reach the mainstream.

8.2c Best Recommendation/Strategy

We believe the best recommendation and strategy is to advertise on websites that would complement Gigfinder. Websites like Facebook and Myspace is where Gigfinder is going to gain its ultimate exposure. Also, although

Gigfinder is a social networking site, it is specifically geared towards music and musicians and does not specifically do what other social networking sites do. Gigfinder's presence on these sites can only gain exposure for the website and create a new buzz around Gigfinder.com.

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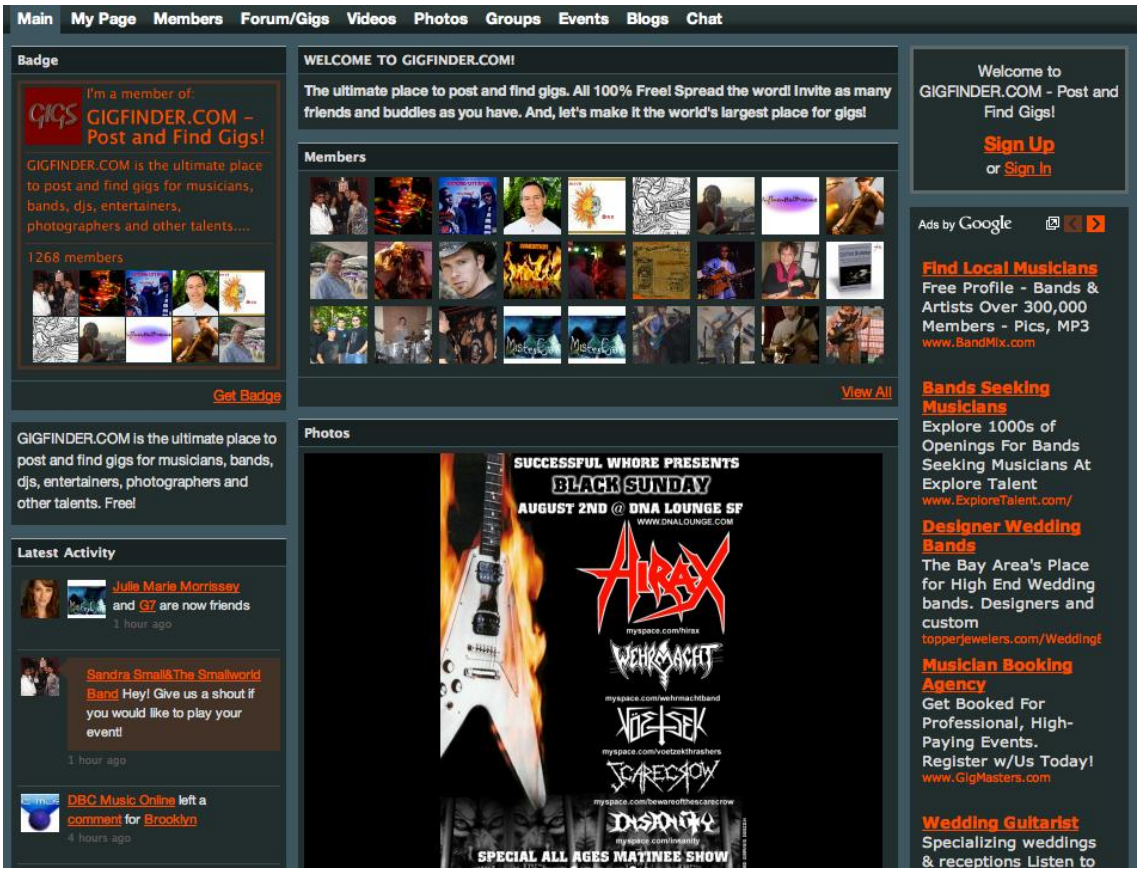
Appendix

1.

Source: www.Gigfinder.com

2. 

Source: www.Gigfinder.com