



## Industry Profile: Lisa Tenner

— By Bob Grossweiner and Jane Cohen

As a business manager, handling financial affairs - everything from paying a client's bills to receiving the income to investments to touring -- anything that has to do with one's financial well-being, Lisa Tenner, founder and executive director of the EAT'M music conference, has used her background in corporate tax, touring and business management well.

For the past two decades, Lisa Tenner has been an integral part of the music industry. As a business manager, she began her career with Toto as her first client and subsequently picked up Korn, Soundgarden, Jane's Addiction, the Warped Tour, and The Monkees, to name a few. Today, Lisa is not as involved in business management as she had been for the past 22 years, with the exception of a few clients.

As president of TENNER & Associates, one of the country's premier event production and consulting companies, Lisa conceptualized a music industry event that would showcase the talents of unsigned bands, individuals and songwriters. That event took shape as Emerging Artists & Talent in Music (EAT'M), which debuted in the spring of 1998 in Las Vegas, where Lisa works and lives. She is the executive producer and founder of EAT'M, which now stands for Emerging Artists & Technology in Music, thanks to major technology sponsorship in pulver.com

"The support of my colleagues and sponsors made this dream come true in under one year," she says. "I'm happy to say the incredible launch in 1998 was exceeded by EAT'M in 1999, when it experienced 180 percent growth in attendance."

Lisa has co-authored "Counseling Clients in the Entertainment Industry" with regards to business management and touring activities for the Practising Law Institute. She has been on the faculty of the Practising Law Institute since 1991, and panels on Continuing Legal Education (CLE) are included at EAT'M. Lisa also has an affiliate faculty membership at UCLA and has been a contributing editor of Entertainment Law & Finance.

Lisa and EAT'M's director Sue Shifrin-Cassidy were honored with the Nevada Governor's Award for Tourism based upon the overwhelming response to EAT'M's conference, showcases and festival. Additionally, the month of May has been named Music Appreciation Month in Nevada in perpetuity.

"I love challenges," muses Lisa, "but I never imagined that a background incorporate tax, touring and business management would lead me down this wild and wonderful road of event production."

### **Why did you start EAT'M?**

Actually, talks first began during SXSW in 1997. Attorney Suzette Beck and I were talking about getting a music conference to the next level and really making the industry accessible to new artists and professionals. Since I lived and worked in Las Vegas, that seemed like the best place to put it. Also, I was trying to change the image that the industry had of Las Vegas and its live performance market of new talent.

### **Did you meet your initial EAT'M goals?**

Well people showed up, bands played and were discovered. Kevin Lyman (profile on Celebrity Access, March 30, 2001) really is the key to making that happen. The Desert Inn was a terrific host hotel and did the most to make this special for everyone who came. It was great. We won't talk about what it cost, but it exceeded my wildest dreams, and when I spoke at the Keynote, I was greeted with a standing ovation and broke down in tears. Everyone had worked so hard to help me realize a dream. I was honored and humbled. Yes, it exceeded what I expected. George Martin came and spoke and that provided us with credibility and an excellent launching pad in the field of education which was our primary goal.

### **Did you model EAT'M after any other industry conferences and what did you learn from other conferences?**

No, I didn't model EAT'M after any other conference. I had my own vision. I did however learn from other conferences--

what was popular and what wasn't - and I tried to improve upon what I had experienced first-hand. Now other events are using us as a standard.

**Why did EAT'M take a sabbatical this year?**

I took a year sabbatical because I was tired. This is like a big bar mitzvah show for four days in Vegas. Plus, I wanted the time to find a great joint venture partner. I found them in pulver.com, an industry leader in the IP community, and we share similar values.

**Why did you sell EAT'M?**

I sold EAT'M for, at the time what we thought, was a good offer. Everyone needs an exit strategy, but it did not benefit the company or my partners.

**First industry job**

Only white female Jew working for a black promoter - Lewis Grey, 1977. I learned everything you do wrong. Left after nine months.

**Career highlight**

Many. Eight Grammy wins with Toto client, 1983. Breakthrough with current client, record producer Ross Robinson, and obviously the acceptance of a new music conference, and the ability to help new upcoming artists. This makes me the most proud of what I do for a living.

**Career disappointment**

The new management of Korn let me go when they took over and never gave me the opportunity of meeting with them or knowing what I did for the artists. After all, I had been a business manager for 20 years and they did not take that into consideration.

**Greatest challenge**

Convincing the industry that there are new trends in music tastes and what direction fans want their artists to follow.

**Best business decision**

Not to give up on EAT'M and to be persistent if you believe in what you do with passion.

**Worst business decision**

Not following my intuition with artists and professionals that I may be working with on a project and not voicing my opinion loud enough to be heard.

**Best business advice**

"Write the truth...Speak the truth" from Robert McKee- a writer's teacher.

**Most memorable concert event**

Always the Rolling Stones and I hope one day to meet any or all of them. And also my first concert my mother took me to -- The Animals. No, I wont give you the year...

**What people would be surprised to learn about you**

That I do have a heart of gold and I would do anything to help anyone, and I really don't mean to be so blunt.

**Office paraphernalia**

What office? A lot of pictures and records.

**Industry pet peeve**

When you are hot you're hot and when you are not you're not. Also, artists can come and go but professionals will always be around and must stick together.

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