

HOW WE SPEND YOUR MONEY

by LOTD

24%
PROGRAMME

There are free admission festivals that mainly rely on bar revenue, subsidies, and sponsors. But when you do have to buy yourself a ticket to attend a festival, what is that hard-earned buck you pay actually being used for? It will always diverge somewhat between festivals how that income is distributed. To provide a bit of understanding of the biggest expenses, however, we've summed up how we spend the money generated from your freshly bought Left of the Dial ticket.

It wouldn't be quite fair to randomly compare Left of the Dial to any other festival. The biggest difference would probably be that Left of the dial is organised by the foundation that runs Rotterdam music venue Rotown. This foundation receives an annual subsidy through local government bodies to produce and promote as many live shows throughout the year as possible. That monetary contribution covers for workhours of permanent employees, and expenses such as renting an office space. Obviously, that's a big chunk of festival costs saved right there. The whole of the festival ticket income can therefore be spent on Left of the Dial alone, split into these categories:

PROGRAMME (24%)

Roughly 24% of all income is spent on programme. One lump goes directly towards the bands and DJs, another part reaches the artist through royalties, music copyright, and licensing organisations (PRS). Some of the acts are represented by booking agencies who also need to be paid. The acts playing Left of the Dial don't receive very substantial fees, often no more than just sufficient to cover for expenses.

HOSPITALITY (18%)

It's because of these humbler fees, Left of the Dial tries to tend to the artists as well as possible. In other words, the percentage of your ticket which is allocated to hospitality, is indirectly spent on the artists as well. Everyone will be well fed, and certainly amply hydrated. For the acts traveling in from further away we also provide lodging. This means that once they're in town there are no further expenses on their own account, which makes it feasible to play the festival on a relatively low fee, without them having to empty their wallets.

Wouldn't it have been more useful to explain why other festivals sometimes charge such ridiculously high service fees?





43%
PRODUCTION

18%
HOSPITALITY

7%
PROMOTION

8%
EXTRA/MISCELLANEOUS

Depending on how quick you were in securing your ticket, it should've set you back around €50. First take away the VAT (9% in The Netherlands). Our service fee is already included in the total sum when you press the purchase now button, but that doesn't mean we don't have to pay for our ticketing system. These compulsory deductions result in roughly €44 we get to spend on putting the festival together.

For the festival this proves to be quite advantageous, as sponsors rather and more often pay in goods than in cash; part of the backstage catering is donated for instance. Hotel rooms in Rotterdam are getting increasingly more expensive, but because Left of the Dial accommodates hundreds of individuals in one fell swoop, it's somewhat more cost efficient and this leaves a bit of money to go towards other stuff, for instance the production of the festival.

PRODUCTION (43%)

The biggest part of the amount you spend on a ticket is being allocated towards the production of Left of the Dial. Hall rental, stage managers, sound technicians, hardware, security, electricity at the ticket desk, the runner who frantically races artists to Bands on a Boat... Every stage light you see has come with a price tag, and has been signed off on, rented, placed, and operated by someone from the production crew. During Left of the Dial the punters luckily are a thirsty bunch, because of this the full hall rental doesn't have to be paid for every venue. Also, some companies give a bit of discount on the gear that we rent. But even then, setting up the production still is the biggest expense for the festival.

PROMOTION (7%)

Bluntly putted: the faster the festival sells out, the smaller the amount of money needed for promotion. And that's partly true. Why would you run a poster campaign or social media ads if you don't have anything to sell? If you're already certain your festival is going to be a onetime endeavour, this runs true. However, if it's your full intent to organise many more editions for the foreseeable future, it's wise to reserve some of your funds to increase your visibility as a festival. Thus far, Left of the Dial has always sold out reasonably fast, and from that you could deduce that a couple of percent of your ticket is being spent to promote future editions. A good part of the promotional budget is spent to familiarise the festivalgoers with all the acts on the upcoming edition's bill. Left of the Dial mainly sports acts that haven't quite yet risen to the echelons of worldwide stardom, so the festival aims to constantly plug their names, faces, and music in every way possible using poster campaigns or social media to, hopefully, provide them with a slightly bigger fanbase by the time the festival weekend rolls around.

EXTRA/MISCELLANEOUS (8%)

If at some point the ticket sales aren't going as swimmingly as tradition would dictate, it's good to be able to bump the promotional budget without having to cut into other vital expenses. Luckily, this hasn't been necessary for past editions, meaning we've had the luxury to spend this buffer on stuff to make the festival a tiny more enjoyable. The sailor hats you can see proudly being donned by artists and punters alike for instance, or more video-sessions with artists. This year we've allocated some of the money within this percentage towards the use green energy, so our sky dancers get to flair with complete guiltfree abandon. ☺