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How To Use The Comparison Chart

Fresh, Relevant and Disposable

Sometime tonight a man will go to his refrigerator for a late night snack. As he opens the 'fridge' door, he'll be hit with a blast of funk and realize that something has overstayed its welcome. Popular music can be the same way – something that was totally kickin' a month ago falls by the wayside to be replaced by another new name. Our musical "fick-ality" spawns phenomena like the *One Hit Wonder* and those *Whatever Happened To* shows on television. This situation also creates a never-ending need to stay on top of who's fresh and who's expired.

For youth leaders, interlinc's Comparison Chart is just the ticket to help students make choices on whether or not they want to check out a Christian album. The problem has always been what happens when the names on that chart reach the "not hot" part of their current career: students are not so willing to consider a band that is a bit past their prime. With that in mind, interlinc has committed to include a new Comparison Chart to YLO members in every YLO issue. Here are a few simple ideas to make the chart work at maximum effectiveness.

Put It Up Where It Makes The Most Sense

The Comparison Chart is a poster with a purpose – please don't just use it to cover the hole in the drywall from the last overnighter. Think about the physical location where your students hang out and evaluate music. If you have a Listening Library, put the chart right next to the shelf full of CD's. Many times students will start their browsing activity by looking at the chart and then go to the CD's. If your CD's live at the sound booth, then put the Comparison Chart there – you may even want to make sure your sound person is ready to engage students about different albums, even handing them over for evaluation. An inexpensive portable CD player and headphone placed near the sound booth will help students

grab a quick listen before the CD goes back into the sound booth lock down. If the CD's end up in your office, you may want to put the Chart on your door – someplace where students can gather around, but not have to invade your personal counseling space.

Keep It Fresh

Once you've found the location, make sure that you have the most current chart up on the wall. When you receive your YLO, grab the magazine and some tape to put up those fresh listings. Your students will be impressed and surprised with the up-to-date artists listed there.

The Chart Is Always In Process

We have some great ears here at interlinc – and we spend a lot of time working to stay on top of the secular music scene. But we are not the final word, nor do we expect everyone to agree with our "sounds like" interpretations. A great way to help the Chart be more effective with your students is to cultivate some graffiti around it. Put up some poster board or a small whiteboard next to the chart and have students write their own reviews about what they've listened to and who they think the artists sound like. Let your students circle their favorite Christian artists on the chart and write little notes. I've even heard of youth ministries where students write notes like, "Jimmy, bring back that CD, it's my turn to borrow it!"

Teenagers cannot disconnect themselves from popular music – they're completely surrounded by it. So it seems there will always be a need for youth leaders to be able to say, "Yeah, they kind of sound like _____". We'll do our part to keep things fresh – just don't leave us in the 'fridge' too long!

