

Guide To Band Leading

TIPS FOR LEADING A BAND IN 2024

www.secondlinearts.org



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AGENDA

- Welcome
- Introduction
- What is a Band Leader?
- Band Structures
- Leadership
- Communication
- Band Leader Finances
- Band Leader Checklist



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CLASS OBJECTIVE

The goal of Guide to Band Leading is to empower aspiring leaders with essential leadership and collaboration skills for band management. We strive to build community through discussions about the realities of band leading in 2024.



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What is a Band Leader?



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WHAT IS A BAND LEADER?

A professional who brings other musicians together to form an ensemble and lead them musically and professionally (rehearsal, performance, business)



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NOTABLE BAND LEADERS

- Duke Ellington
- Art Blakey
- Wynton Marsalis
- Jon Batiste
- Tank (Tank and the Bangas)
- Kamasi Washington
- Robert Galsper
- Herbie Hancock
- Trombone Shorty
- Christian Scott



P R O M P T

What skills would benefit a band leader?



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WHAT SKILLS BENEFIT BAND LEADERS?

Non Musical Skills

- Leadership
- Communication
- Vision
- Organization
- Delegate responsibility
- Technological abilities
- Accountable and dependable
- Punctuality
- Inspirational
- Sound System

Musical Skills

- Instrumental proficiency
- Arranging
- Composition
- Production
- Song writing
- Musical preparation



WHAT ARE THE BAND LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

- Selecting musicians
- Managing musicians
- Rehearsing musicians
- Curating musical selections
- Booking gigs
- Paying musicians
- Logistical responsibilities
- Liaison between client and musician
- Before you get management, you are your own manager, booking agent, PR, etc.

Band Configurations



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P R O M P T

Create a list of 5 bands, musical groups, artists, or musicians



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BAND CONFIGURATIONS

- **All For One**
- **Core Band and Hired Guns**
- **Owner/Solo Artist and Hired Guns**
- **Solo Artist**
- **Freelance Musician**
- These band configurations are not set in stone
- We can exist in multiple configurations at the same time
- Think about the band configuration that best suits your goals and work flow



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

All For One

- Multiple member ensemble
- Everyone is an equal partner in this band configuration
- While there may be a ‘front person’ or ‘leader’ in this type of group, every member has an equal stake in the band.
- If you are planning on starting an All For One structure, it is important to have a legal document or contract detailing the inner workings of the band: how are decisions made, how is money delegated, how is intellectual material split, what happens if the band splits?



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

All For One

Pros:

- Expenses, profits, and responsibilities are equally shared
- Everyone has a stake in the success of the band

Cons:

- Disagreements amongst the band can be complicated when there are too many people making decisions
- Splitting up can be a complicated legal process

Examples:

- The Rumble
- Blink 182
- The Rolling Stones

BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Core Band and Hired Guns

- There is a core group that hires additional musicians to perform
- The core band ultimately operates very similarly to an All For One structure
- The band can hire additional musicians as subcontractors/freelance musicians
- Sub-contracted musicians are only responsible for agreed upon terms: learn music, rehearse, play gigs



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Core Band and Hired Guns

Pros:

- The core band is able to make decisions without consulting freelance musicians
- The band size can be adjusted based on the project and budget

Cons:

- It can be a challenge to maintain a consistent band sound when musicians are changing
- Subcontracted musicians do not have much say with management or the direction of the band itself

Examples:

- Galactic
- Tank and the Bangas
- The Revivalist
- Maroon 5



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Solo Artist and Hired Guns

- There is one owner
- The artist hires musicians based on the project
- Most of the time the artist's name is marketed and becomes a brand in and of itself
- The artist has the final say in all matters



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Solo Artist and Hired Guns

Pros:

- When things go well, you reap 100% of the reward
- Most of your collaborations are work for hires- you are hiring professionals to help you with given projects
- The band size can be adjusted based on the project and budget

Cons:

- You are responsible for all aspects of your career
- Creating a team, booking gigs, creating music, facilitating EVERYTHING!
- Responsible for paying your team even if your project fails

Examples:

- Michael Buble
- Lady Gaga
- Justin Timberlake
- Ray Charles
- Taylor Swift
- Trombone Shorty
- Beyoncé



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Solo Artist

- Someone who performs all alone
- Usually a one person band, producer, soloist
- You can collaborate with other musicians, but the focus is on the solo artist



BAND STRUCTURES

Solo Artist

Pros:

- You can travel light.
- Decisions mainly impact one person, you

Cons:

- Can be a lonely journey
- Creative road blocks

Examples:

- Ed Sheeran
- Helen Gillet



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Freelance Musician

- Musicians who specialize in performing with a variety of artists, bands, or events
- You are being hired by others to perform at their concert or event
- Wide repertoire of songs and styles
- Keep organized schedule
- Know repertoire
- Perform at a high level
- Your main responsibility is to support the event, not pushing you own art or being the star of the show



BAND CONFIGURATIONS

Freelance Musician

Pros:

- Freedom to focus solely on music
- Play with a variety of bands and artist
- Perform many different musical styles
- Only take gigs you want

Cons:

- Reliant on others for work
- No job security; You can be hired and fired for no reason
- Only the cats (other musicians) will know freelance artists

Examples:

- Most cats in New Orleans
- All of us at some point in our career



Leadership



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P R O M P T

Think of an ‘authority’ figure in your life that **inspired** you: boss, mentor, teacher, parent.

What characteristics about them did you admire, connect with, inspire you?



P R O M P T

Think of an ‘authority’ figure in your life that had a **negative** impact on you.

What characteristics about them did you not like?



LEADERSHIP

You are the Leader

- **Being an effective leader is a skill that can be developed over time**
- Coach, guide, and inspire others
- A leader manages individuals to keep teams aligned and working toward shared goals
- Your band is looking to you for trust, compassion, stability, and hope
- Responsible for the engagement of those who you lead
- Leadership is a balance between high confidence and the humility to admit being wrong



LEADERSHIP

Setting the Tone of Your Ensemble

- Setting the tone: musical and non-musical
- Set the culture of your group: this is how we do things
- The band will emulate your organization, communication, motivation, attitude, and creative juju



LEADERSHIP

You are the Leader

- Are you approachable?
- Are you fair?
- Are you a dictator?
- Are you lazy?
- Are you mean?
- Are you prepared?
- Are you inspiring?
- Are you trustworthy?
- Are you organized?
- Are you generous?



LEADERSHIP

Delegate Responsibility.

- The leader defines outcomes and delegates responsibilities
- Great leaders set their team up for success by delegating responsibility based on ability
- Do not delegate tasks to people who are not interested, qualified, or dependable



Communication



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COMMUNICATION

Communication

- **Being a clear and effective communicator is a skill that can be developed**
- Clear communication is key in all relationships
- This business is all about relationships
- Being an effective communicator is one way to strengthen your relationships and people's desire to work with you
- Efficient communication happens when expectations are clear, concise, concrete, correct, coherent, complete, and courteous.
- All important communication must happen verbally and in writing.
- Prioritize efficiency; too much unnecessary communication can create fatigue and increases the risk of important information being lost



COMMUNICATION

How to Hire a Musician in One Text

- You are the liaison between the client and your band
- Be clear and efficient with your communications

- **When hiring musicians for gigs be sure to include the following:**
- Date
- Time
- Location
- Dress
- Special requests; instruments, sound equipment, event details
- Pay



P R O M P T

You are the band leader of your ensemble. Your guitarist is a childhood friend and great musician. This person constantly shows up late and unprepared for gigs and rehearsal.

What do you do?



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COMMUNICATION

Dealing with Conflict in an Ensemble

- Conflict in any relationship is to be expected and is completely normal
- It is important to address expectations and conflicts directly and courteously
- Make sure band members know you are unsatisfied; they are not mind readers and need to know how and why things are not right
- Have a conversation in person/on the phone/ zoom THEN send a email/text clearly articulating expectations
- When there is a breakdown of communication you want to be able to reference some type of written document
- When things are in writing you reduce the chances of miscommunication



COMMUNICATION

3 Strike Rule

1. Communicate problem and set solution
2. Restate issue-We had a conversation, the expectation was not met, and I am unsatisfied. If you cannot meet this expectation this will be the result.
3. Result



COMMUNICATION

How to Fire Musicians

- If conflict has been clearly communicated and cannot be resolved you may have to fire a musician
- You can fire a musician for any reason; musical or non-musical
- Have a conversation in person, on phone, or via zoom
- Make sure your tone is calm and courteous
- If you feel it is necessary, explain why someone is being let go
- The music business is all about maintaining good relationships
- Having challenging conversations in person/phone may be more challenging in the moment, but will be best for maintaining long term relationship



Money



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MONEY

Money, Money, Money.

- Most of us get into this industry because of a love and passion for music
- Money is rarely addressed in music education
- Most musicians have to learn about the financial realities of music on the fly
- Many lessons occur after something 'bad' has happened



MONEY

Band Fund

- Every band should set up legal entities to separate their business from themselves
- LLC or S-Corp
- Band Fund/Bank Account
- Money goes into the band account, then pays musicians and expenses
- Set money aside for future band expenses; tour, record, promo, van, etc.
- Expenses are tax deductible
- Make sure you have good credit
- Business Credit Card-This is necessary when you have to front expenses before getting paid;
Flights, hotels, rentals, tour



MONEY

How to Keep Track of Finances

- Stay away from paying cash because it can complicate record keeping
- QuickBooks, Spread Sheet document
- Pay Musicians Electronically: Zelle, Cash App, Venmo
- Stay away from cash because it can complicate record keeping



P R O M P T

You have an upcoming gig at reputable venue called to ‘The Striped Leopard.’ You have a door deal of \$20 per person. There are 6 members in your ensemble, how much do you pay them?



MONEY

Morality of Paying Musicians

- Ultimately, you are the band leader and make the final decisions on how much you pay your bandmates
- It is important to be clear about how and when musicians will be paid
- Are you paying fairly?
- How will band mates feel when they compare rates?
- How will they feel when they know how much you are getting paid?
- What will happen to your reputation?



MONEY

Pay Scenarios

- Set Rate
 - Musicians get paid the same rate no matter the gig
 - Responsible for paying the band no matter how much money the gig pays
 - Make money or lose money on every gig
 - Extra money can be put into the band fund for future expenses
-
- Yearly Salary
 - Each gig pays \$100
 - Every day on the road pays \$100



MONEY

Pay Scenarios

- Gig by Gig Pay
- You adjust musicians salaries based on how much your gig pays
- As a band leader you can take a fee to cover your additional responsibilities.
- Band leader gets double, 25%, 10% more?
- \$100 per gig
- \$500 per gig



MONEY

Pay Scenarios

- Tip Gigs
- These gigs are very common in New Orleans
- Many venues pay 20% of bar sales plus tips
- Split evenly amongst members
- 10% to band fund, then split evenly



Band Leader Check List



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BAND LEADER CHECK LIST

Things Every Band Leader Needs-

- These are essential documents or things band leaders should have and ready to use at a moments notice
- If you ever have 'free' time and need something to do, make sure you have these things ready



BAND LEADER CHECK LIST

- Social Media
- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouTube
- Facebook
- Whatever else comes out...
- Website
- Band Bio
- Press Photos
- LLC or S-Corp
- Album/EPK/Singles
- Email List
- Band/Business Email
- Logo
- Videos
- Press Articles
- Sheet Music for Musicians
- Quickbooks/Spreadsheet
- Stage plot
- Backline requirements
- Credit Card
- Invoice Template
- Gig Agreement template
- W9
- EPK

Thank you!

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