

# Rock'n'Roll Survival Guide

First Aid for the Rock'n'Roll Circus

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# Contents

<b>Rock'n'Roll Survival Guide</b>	<b>2</b>
So You wanna be a Rock'n'Roll star? . . . . .	2
Learn about your Motivation and set your Goals . . . . .	3
Know basic etiquette . . . . .	4
Know basic Psychology . . . . .	5
Learn to write songs . . . . .	7
Learn how to communicate . . . . .	8
Know the difference between Rehearsal and Practice . . . . .	9
Learning without a teacher . . . . .	10
Learn from several teachers . . . . .	12
Find a good band . . . . .	13
Learn how to play live . . . . .	14
Color code for wiring . . . . .	16
Line check vs. sound check . . . . .	17
Redundancy . . . . .	18
Learn how to speed up change over at festivals . . . . .	19
Buy good equipment . . . . .	19
Play with ear protection . . . . .	21
Know when it is time to hire other people . . . . .	22
Coach . . . . .	23
Manager . . . . .	25
Booker . . . . .	26
Backliner . . . . .	27
Merchandise . . . . .	28
Insurance . . . . .	29

# **Rock'n'Roll Survival Guide**

## **So You wanna be a Rock'n'Roll star?**

You pick up a guitar, learn some chords, jump on the stage.

It could be this easy! But I'm afraid it's not :-)

## **Learn about your Motivation and set your Goals**

Why do I want to learn an instrument? Why do I want to become a musician?

Impress ladies, make families happy at festivities, earn money money with music, teach an instrument yourself or just become a rock star?

Becoming aware of this motivation is the decisive factor for your learning progress, since learning without a goal rarely leads to success.

A clearly formulated goal can also focus on the correct choice of means to achieve the goal.

Example: Everyone wants to get from A to B, but it depends on whether A and B are LA and New York, or your city and the neighboring village.

In the first case, I need either a train connection, a car and a GPS, or a plane ticket.

In the second case, a hiking map and good shoes may be sufficient.

In other words: the goals or the distance of the goal from one's own point of view determine the choice of means.

You can of course also walk from LA to New York, it just takes longer.

Ok, long story short: When I'm short on time, I shouldn't rely solely on my intuition when studying, especially when I have ambitious goals.

People such as teachers, coaches, managers and bookers can accompany and support you on your way to success.

## **Know basic etiquette**

Make it clear from the start that if you want to make it happen, you can forget the rock star pose for now.

Then when you're headlining at Wacken or Rock im Park, you can start thinking about ravaging hotel rooms. And even then, it's likely that this will come off your fee. Think carefully about it.

But what never goes out of style are simple things like "please" and "thank you".

This is also great to practice in the rehearsal room. The biggest stars in the world are humble and nice people that even your grandma would find sympathetic.

Ultimately, it's about business and that is performance for money, i.e. there is always an opposing side (Organizers, club owners, fans, etc.) with whom you should be good.

The best way to do this is to be polite. In the last few years we have played with a number of bands that have engaged us as openers for gigs in Coburg. As local support, it was our job to provide part of the backline and distribute flyers and posters and massively promote the whole gig.

Almost as much effort as if we had organized the gig on our own. When a couple of young snobbugs arrive with their school band on the day of the performance, neither greet nor dignify a glance, pull off their mediocre show and feel free to Say goodbye again . . . We're not talking about gage now. Well, what can you say?

The moral of the story ':

Would you recommend this band or hire it as local support, if you would play in e.g. Fulda?

As a club owner, would you hire the band on your own initiative? So, try "please" and "thank you" the next time simply without obligation.

If that's not for you, you can exchange it in the shop and get your money back.

## **Know basic Psychology**

Practice creates masters! But how do we manage to take our daily dose of practice? I have students who dutifully pack their guitar in the case and then hide it in the closet or under the bed. And then ask yourself why they didn't come back to practice that week. Quite simply: out of sight, out of mind.

## **Generate attention for our goals**

You can remedy this by setting up your guitar on a guitar stand in the living room / study. It looks like a fruit bowl on the table, you just grab it when you walk past.

## **Avoid distractions**

Telephone, cell phone, internet, especially Facebook with its many games keep you from reaching your goal - learning to play an instrument - get closer by eating up your time. Do as Peter Lustig recommends: Just switch off :-)

## **Plan fixed times**

Humans are creatures of habits. Playing the guitar must become as natural as brushing your teeth. Make it a ritual to strum five minutes right after you get up or five minutes before you go to bed. That brings more than the resolution to spend two hours with the instrument once a week. Hopefully you don't brush your teeth just once a week, do you?

## **Talisman principle**

Beginners in particular feel unsettled by the endless variety of the material to be learned, there are so many decisions to be made: Which chords do I have to learn? Guitar pick or fingerstyle?

Which songs and riffs should I know by heart? Above all: what should I learn and when? Since learning is not a linear process, every learner has different motivations and every brain also works differently (prior knowledge, divergent / convergent, intro / extroverted), most of these questions can only be answered with gut feeling

One technique that helps against the feeling of being lost is the talisman principle.

**What is it exactly?** The musical talisman is what the rosary is to the good Catholic: something that I keep coming back to, that I have mastered inside out and that helps me through difficult hours. For me it was the A minor pentatonic in the fifth position for years. There are several things now, mostly self-written riffs and solos. I start every study / practice / creative session with one of these talismans. It's like a hiking trail that I've walked 100 times and from which I break new ground. My safe home

port, so to speak. He is always at the beginning of a journey and I return to him every time a storm of uncertainty approaches.

**Choose wisely** It is important to choose a talisman in such a way that it does justice to your own level of development, i.e. you have mastered it well. It should be tightened from time to time so that awareness of the level of learning achieved develops. When I am creative, I build myself new fragments that resemble my talisman and can use other creative techniques such as the head-tail method (to come!) To assemble them into more complex structures. When learning new pieces, I first look for the parts that resemble my talisman (e.g. in a solo the part that uses the minor pentatonic scale) and perfect the parts independently of the rest. You can compare that to translating a text. I don't start at the first word and look up the meaning, but first look for words that I already know. This will reduce your uncertainty and increase your motivation to tackle the learning project.

**Conclusion** There is already something in every new piece that you can already do. Look out for it!

### **Electronic helpers**

Apps can also help you learn habits. One of my favorite apps is Coach.me

It lets you set goals such as "play guitar six days a week".

Then you can be reminded of it daily and then, when you have practiced, tick off.

So you can keep track of whether you have achieved your weekly goals.

## **Learn to write songs**

You will be a much more in-demand musician if you can write songs. And of course regarding royalties you will get more out of it, if you were part of the songwriting process.

### **How to write good songs?**

The simple answer: practice, practice, practice!

The same as practising an instrument, you have to dedicated time to songwriting.



## **Learn how to communicate**

The early bird catches the worm!

Everyone is always available today, cell phone, email, Facebook, Instant Messenger, Skype, etc.

But does it mean that we communicate faster and better?

In my experience not a whit.

Many people check their emails several times a day, but only reply after a week.

It is often enough to inform the sender of a message when you will take care of your request. If I can formulate an answer within 3-5 minutes, I should do that and send it off.

## **Be quick or be dead!**

In a business environment, people want quick, binding feedback, that is precisely why the phone is not dead.

Use it as often as possible. Appointments with venues in particular should be done quickly, use an online calendar within the band to do this, to see if everyone has time. If you don't enter your oh-so-important private appointments and have therefore agreed to gigs, who then can't be played, throws him out of the band.

With another employer, colleagues usually cannot afford to mess around with appointments.

## **Talk is cheap!**

How easy is it to make a promise, like: I'll help you move, I'll fix your car, etc. Just because you could do something doesn't mean you really want to do it.

Do you sometimes say things to look good?

Be honest with yourself. Do you really want to keep what you have promised?

You will be measured by whether you keep your promises.

So if in doubt, it is better to say no beforehand, then the disappointment is not so great afterwards.

## **Know the difference between Rehearsal and Practice**

Rehearsing and practicing: it's the same, isn't it? Nope!

Practice is learning pieces, riffs, licks or solos. Everyone does it nicely at home alone.

Rehearsals, on the other hand, is the joint development of new pieces after everyone has mastered their part.

Only when I can already do my stuff can it be ensured that I don't spoil the other by gambling myself over and over again. Of course, you cannot avoid practicing something new during a rehearsal, but since everyone generally has a different learning pace, This preparatory work should take place at home in order to make a rehearsal more efficient.

### **Tools**

Of course, in order to practice effectively at home, one should know what to practice. For this it is helpful to note down your parts.

Depending on the instrument, there are useful aids: While the classics still use paper, is suitable for band context programs such as GuitarPro, TuxGuitar, or Cubase.

GuitarPro is the standard in many bands and in lessons because almost everything is already available as a ready-to-download file on the Internet. Tuxguitar is a free alternative.

Cubase or Logic also have the advantage that you can record / play back your (guitar) track for control purposes.

## Learning without a teacher

A question that is asked very often in guitar forums: Is it really only possible to learn guitar with books and material from the Internet?

The simple answer: YES!

The somewhat more extravagant answer: Yes, provided the learner has enough stamina and willingness to experiment.

There is really very good material on the net. Finding this is of course the challenge.

When you start with an instrument, of course, you cannot judge the quality of the material very well.

Videos on YouTube in particular should be viewed with caution, as often only one song is played but not didactically prepared. Sometimes you only see the gripping hand, often the resolution is so poor that you have to guess where the fingers are now.

Sometimes what has been explained is simply wrong. If you can speak English, it looks a little better overall.

In the beginning you should fall back on good, tried and tested books.

While a video usually only covers a small problem area of guitar playing, a textbook has a plan in which order which things should be learned.

It is better to work through a book consistently and then to the now known subject areas, some are interested in watching videos and tutorials from the net.

In the rock area there are e.g. Peter Fischer's "Rock Guitar Basics" or "Rock Guitar Secrets". Peter Bursch is also a good point of contact.

The many years of teaching experience of the authors is condensed in the books. Well, between "only lessons with teacher" and "only single-handedly learning" Thank God there are enough intermediate stages:

1. You can try good (video) distance learning to build up / expand on the basics.

The New Music Academy offers a very extensive program. The advantage is that all of the material has been tested and there is no risk of "wrong" To act out things.

2. You can visit a guitar teacher who offers coaching.

That means, you meet with him whenever you have enough " problems " that you want to solve in the near future, the hard nuts, so to speak. Since this does not have to happen on a weekly basis and you do not enter into any long-term obligations (annual contract or similar), there is also no pressure.

3. Personal exchange with other musicians is, in my opinion, the most important thing.

So you get to know other ways of seeing and thinking, you see that you are not the only one having problems learning an instrument. It is not at all important that the other musicians master the same instrument or are at the same level of learning, on the contrary:

If you can teach someone something, your knowledge will consolidate. And since nobody is better at all things, there is always a fruitful bilateral exchange.

## **Learn from several teachers**

Good guitarists almost always had lessons from a teacher: Kirk Hammett, Tom Morello and Steve Vai had lessons from Joe Satriani. Steve Vai teaches at Berklee College.

Paul Gilbert (Mr. Big) studied guitar at the Guitar Institute of Technology and is now teaching there again. As you can see, learning and teaching are often closely linked.

Guitarists who have had a good education are often interested in passing on their own experiences.

## **Good education? Good teacher?**

A good teacher works like a navigation device that bypasses traffic jams.

If it doesn't go any further, it shows shortcuts and alternative routes. In addition, it can also display "Point of Interests": new styles, new bands and new pieces.

The most important thing a teacher has to do is maintain a student's original motivation.

This rarely works with rigid curricula and ready-made textbooks.

A good teacher has to master the tightrope walk between teaching the basics and supporting the student's thirst for research.

If you've made up your mind to study with a teacher, don't commit too soon.

If it doesn't go well in the first few hours, e.g. human not fit, tried several teachers.

As a teenager I made the mistake of going to the electric guitar teacher at the local music school, with the result that I had to go to a jazz big band and spend two years on impersonal standard lessons and lack of awareness of the problem with the teacher.

As a skinny youngster playing 3 semitones on a telephoto with 10 strings is no picnic.

Then there were carelessly copied sheets of handwritten notes, you probably know from school. . .

## **Personal goals**

From a distance, the basic problem was that the teacher was not where I wanted to be on the big rock'n'roll stage.

It wasn't until years later that I found out that there are opportunities beyond the local music school: Workshops at renowned schools such as the Jazz and Rock School Freiburg, Take lessons from the greats of show business like Viktor Smolski from Rage, or simply good teaching material in the form of videos and textbooks by super guitarists like John Petrucci or Joe Satriani.

## **Find a good band**

In addition to a teacher and good equipment, an own band should come into play as soon as possible. The band has the function of a reality check. A) You have to really master your stuff to be able to play. B) You learn timing and feeling together, which is very difficult to develop on your own. C) A good band automatically raises the bar bit by bit, both in songwriting and instrumental play. Competition is the magic word.

## **When is a band a good band?**

The same applies here as for your own goals: If you mainly want to hiss beer in the band, the musical progress could be rather meager.

But if you want to tear down concerts regularly, you have the focus again and the rest almost takes care of itself. So put the goals of your band to the test! It is even better to formulate your common goals. Every normal company has a business plan, why not you? You can call it a timetable or a global conquest strategy plan if the word business is too difficult for you.

It is important that you write down the goals in as much detail as possible.

In roughly the following scheme:

“We, the band Shotgun Wedding, want to play 12 concerts in 2012 and record a CD with 12 pieces. The CD should be sent to 12 music magazines and each band member should receive a fee of 12 euros for each concert. In addition, we want to have 12 different merchandise articles produced and sell at least 12 T-shirts or CDs at every concert.”

It could look like this. For 2013 you will raise the bar a bit higher, let's say 18 concerts. If you do not manage to stick to the plan, you have to analyze what went wrong and, if necessary, make the plan for the following year more realistic.

## **The practice**

An example from practice: For the band of my pals Queen Mom I did some booking. After the number of concerts since the foundation was around 5 to 10 gigs a year and the band was very dissatisfied with it, we held a goal-setting discussion and decided that we want to play 30 concerts in the following year.

Quite a number for an amateur band. In the end it was only 25 gigs, but the direction was clear, everyone could see how far we were still away from the goal. Everyone hung in!

## **Learn how to play live**

What makes a good live band? Or what is the difference between an amateur and a professional?

I had already written about stage presence. I would like to add the following to this:

### **Tune instruments “silently”**

Nothing annoys the audience more than guitarists and bassists who tune their instruments at full volume. Stop it! Tuners, also commonly called tuners, that mute the output signal are now so cheap that there is actually no excuse left.

Ideally you start to tune immediately after the last note of the song and use the time in which someone makes an announcement.

With good instruments, it is often enough to retune the most frequently used strings.

If you have done a few bends on the g and h strings in a solo, for example, you will primarily tune these strings.

That saves a lot of time, because you know “The show must go on!”

If your guitar goes out of tune with the slightest stroke of it, it may be time for a new violin.

### **Volume potentiometer closed when you are not playing!**

It is probably in the children’s room. It doesn’t matter yet, but: The volume is already high on the stage; you don’t have to make an additional contribution by always having your volume control open.

Turn it as often as possible, otherwise something is always buzzing / squeaking / whistling. This is another way to distinguish the professional from the amateur.

A good guitar shouldn’t whistle when you turn up the volume.

On stage you often only notice whether the guitar is good for something: pickups that are too cheap tend to couple.

### **Start together**

Sounds pretty banal, but not every band can do it.

Classic sequence:

- Singer (or someone with a microphone) announces the song.
- Devout silence
- Then the drummer counts in.
- Everyone then starts playing together.

The stupidest thing you can do is stop and count in again because someone missed his mission. The train doesn't stop either and goes backwards into the station if you weren't on the platform on time. Then you have to take the next one.

So we come to:

### **Do not abort on errors**

You can do it when you practice at home, but live such a "musicus interruptus" is rather creepy.

Well, there are bands that are part of the repertoire, but normally nobody wants to hear that.

What can I do if I gamble myself away?

The magic formula is to synchronize to the next 1!

Just take a deep breath and go on.

If that's too difficult, just jump into the next chorus or verse, 99% of the audience will not check it out and will mistake the part in which you are not playing as a bass or drum solo.

### **Stop together**

It is also annoying when an instrument continues to rumble, be it the bass or a guitar.

The audience doesn't get the impression that you're all playing the same song.

It should be clear to everyone when the song is over.

There are these beautiful endings, where everyone still scrapes something, if necessary, the Drum Smurf has to count again in the sense of 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - OFF, if it is not clear how long the rumbling will take place.

Have fun doing it!

### **Stage presence**

Now that you have mastered your instrument and cannot save yourself from concert inquiries, it is high time to anchor yourself in the minds of the audience. How does it work? In addition to your instrument, you still have your voice, your eyes and the rest of your body to make contact with the audience.

**Announcements** The closer, the better! If people don't know you, they don't care how the song came about (pardon!), What feelings you wanted to express with it, etc. Name of the song, a rough classification of the topic and off you go. Sometimes you are forced to make longer announcements when the singer has to take a sip or the guitarist retuning.



Then the motto is: sell, sell, sell!

“The next song is also on our CD, which you can buy at the merch stand.” or “Our homepage [www.we-are-the-best.com](http://www.we-are-the-best.com). Leave a comment on our insta” Important for announcements: No inside jokes! You should have fun with your music and show it, but if nobody else laughs not so great. Which is not to say that anecdotes from the daily life of the band cannot also arrive, but unfortunately most of the musclers have no stand-up comedian talent.

**Eye contact** Nothing is worse than people who play on stage like at home on the edge of the bed. Eyes on the ground, on the fretboard or in the air. You guys have paying guests!

Many big stars use the following method: They focus precisely on one viewer and keep making eye contact. Don't stare, but play so that he thinks you're only playing for him.

**Video recording** In order to continuously improve your stage presence, every gig has to be recorded. Analyze your performance in terms of announcements / eye contact / body language after each appearance.

### **Equipment for the stage**

Some manufacturers have a bad rap, not because the devices are bad, but because they are under stressful conditions Badly operated in the dim stage light.

Need some examples? \* Buttons that cannot be seen whether they are pressed or not \* Missing or difficult to read labels (e.g. impedance of boxes) \* Plug-in power supply units without strain relief \* lousy handles \* too small castors \* Micros with switches

All of this can spoil my day because poor handling inevitably leads to operating errors.

It has to be fast on stage, a change over shouldn't take longer than the band's set, so check your equipment for stage suitability!

### **Color code for wiring**

As already mentioned in the chapter Change Over, things have to happen quickly on stage. It's difficult, especially on dark stages Read numbers or letters on the equipment.

For example, guitar cabinets have different impedances and a tube amplifier can take it really badly, if you connect it to a box with insufficient impedance, or if you use the wrong output socket.

If your setup consists of more than just a box and amp, wiring problems can arise. Loop in effects device in parallel or in series, or rather connect it upstream?

### **Easy livin'**

You can make your life easier by marking inputs / outputs and cables that belong together with a color.

For this you use colored electrical tape.

So you only have to plug brown on brown, red on red, etc. and no longer have to worry too much about where which cable goes.

This also makes it easier to teach in a backliner that does not yet have the full technical understanding.

Plugging a multicore into a mixer also saves you a lot of time and avoids errors. The resistor color code is ideal here, in which a number is assigned to each color.

You stick the insulating tape once around the XLR connector and once on the book on the mixer. From the 9 you have to use two colors, see table.

### **Line check vs. sound check**

The line check is used to determine whether all microphones are working correctly, are well placed and the signal arrives on the right channel at the mixer. ^ In the case of well-known bands and large events, the line check is done by the crew.

You will not have this luck at the beginning, so that each of you must actively help. That means everyone is asked individually to play their instrument.

For the rest of the band it is first of all to be quiet and shut up, so that the man at the mixer has a chance to do his job. The same applies here as in school: whoever is called is on (and only he or she).

The function of the soundcheck is to balance the volume of the instruments with one another.

With the big players in show business, the backliners of the respective band do that because they know the songs and the instrumentation.

As newbies, you have to do it yourself again.

The best thing to do is to play a song in which all band members play at the same time, e.g. go straight to the chorus, so that the ratio of rhythm faction and lead instruments can be set well.

The same applies here: Don't chew for a long time, keep your neck on your neck.

The song you play for the soundcheck shouldn't be determined by grassroots democracy on stage, but are determined in advance. Maybe just compose a soundcheck song.

## **Redundancy**

Nothing is more annoying for a viewer than having to wait in the middle of a concert for it to continue, because, for example, the guitarist broke a string.

You can't prevent things like this from happening, but in such cases it's called "Damage Control".

### **Limit damage - but how?**

By - to stick to the example - not starting to put on new strings on the guitar in the poor stage light, but directly to the already perfectly tuned replacement guitar.

Ideally, your backliner is a capable man and already has the fresh ukulele on hand before you're on the edge of the stage.

Redundancy means here: always carry twice with you what can break!

Guitars are the smaller problem here, because sooner or later every guitarist will have several guitars that just have to be taken along.

Ideally, you also have a duplicate of amps, boxes, effects, etc.

If you have a wireless system, a simple cable can replace it, but more redundancy is always better and also looks more professional.

If you are a young band who plays in a club with other bands, talk to the other bands before the performance, who is allowed to play what, by whom, in the worst case Discussions when the child has fallen into the well are uh uh.

## **Learn how to speed up change over at festivals**

Change over is the tear down and set up of stage equipment between the sets of two bands. It should be done as quickly as possible so as not to bore the audience or to drive them away.

Make sure that you can set up your equipment almost blindly and that you know in which order it is the fastest. This, too, can and should be practiced if you want to become professional.

### **Live test**

I was allowed to take part in a competition with my band once, in which there was only 30 minutes of playing time per band.

15 minutes were planned for the change over and since we wanted to play as many songs as possible, we practiced the conversion with the stopwatch in hand.

One or two processes optimized; those who finished with their things helped the others!

Instruments were already perfectly tuned in the case, the wireless system already attached to the guitar strap.

All in all, we only needed 5 minutes and were able to play a third longer than planned. That is a competitive advantage that should not be underestimated.

It's up to you to prove your professionalism even with these little things.

pagebreak

## **Buy good equipment**

The longer a trip lasts, the more comfortable the vehicle should be. Sure right? Don't let cheap stuff spoil your fun. There are always these entry-level sets with guitar, amplifier, tuner and music stand for € 80. The amplifiers make a shitty sound, the guitars keep getting out of tune, the strings break more often than necessary, the feel is honestly for the ass.

### **Saver**

With a car with 40 HP and too little air in the tires, driving the Kassel mountains on the A7 these days is no picnic. I myself made the mistake of tormenting myself for too long on such an entry-level set, even though my ambitions extended beyond playing in the living room from the start.

This should not be a recommendation to sink ten thousand euros right at the beginning, but thought the other way around:

When I realize that the guitar is not for me and I sell my equipment with a loss of 500.00 (which is rare with branded goods), then it is as if I have spent 500, - for free, but probably for it. could gamble on great equipment for one to two years (€ 20 per month!).

Great, now I still don't know how much to spend on what?

### **How much can it be?**

Ok, maybe. As a rough rule of thumb: 70% of your budget for the guitar, 25% for the amplifier and 5% for cable, tuner, metronome.

Let's say € 1000 budget, then € 700 for the guitar, € 250 for amps and € 50 for odds and ends.

In my opinion, the focus and ear should always be on the guitar first.

The less budget you have, the fewer bells and whistles the guitar should have.

For example, you should buy a fixed bridge guitar because a good vibrato system like a Floyd Rose alone costs over \$ 200.

Bad vibrato systems are characterized by the fact that you have to retune after a few loose bends.

Since with beginners tuning the guitar often takes a long time, even with a tuner, tends to be retuned less often, so that the guitar sounds shabby with vibrato more often.

And that has an effect on practicing, because if it sounds scary, you hit the strings less often.

Do not underestimate this form of negative feedback loops!

## **Play with ear protection**

If you want to stay in business as a professional musician for a long time, you should protect your most important sensory organ professionally.

Damage that has once occurred to the ear can no longer be repaired and very often leads to considerable impairment of the quality of life. Keyword: tinnitus and sudden hearing loss.

It makes sense to have individually adapted hearing protection, a so-called otoplastic, preferably with variable attenuation.

Since the exposure to noise depends not only on the absolute volume but also on the exposure time, The rule of thumb is: the longer loud, the more damping.

If you rehearse for three hours, 25 - 30 dB attenuation is certainly useful, For performances lasting around an hour, around 15 dB is sufficient because more details are retained. You still want to hear whether the audience is clapping or booing!

A professional and recommended manufacturer of hearing protection is, for example, HEARSAFE.

This has a good and professional range of different products for musicians in its range.

## **Know when it is time to hire other people**

## **Coach**

At some point you have the basics and no longer need weekly lessons.

Take a car, for example: driving school, parking and driving on the motorway work fine. Now it's more about beautiful excursion destinations or racetrack training. A coach can help you with this.

Classic tasks here are:

- How do I find my own tone?
- How do I approach composing / soloing?
- How do I deal with mental blocks?
- How is the music business going?

Not that a good teacher can't know that too.

I would rather differentiate coaching from traditional weekly lessons.

The teacher is like the boss at work who tells you when to do what.

A coach is more like a management consultant, whom you bring on board for tricky, unusual problems. The time periods are important here; it can be sufficient to contact a coach once or twice a year.

### **How can that work?**

The better you get, the better you can name and collect your problems and the more intensive such coaching is.

With three hours of coaching with Viktor Smolski (Rage), I was happy to spend half a year with follow-up work.

Mostly you only have one teacher, you can get several coaches at the same time.

Each coach has his specialty and you can and should work on several problem areas in parallel. For example: self-marketing, stage presence, advancement on the instrument.

### **When is a coach a (good) coach?**

- He should be where you want to be. That is why most music teachers drop out as coaches because they seldom appear on the big stages or produce CDs, and seldom have general success in the music business outside of teaching.
- He has to want to coach or be aware that he is a coach. Either the coach of your choice doesn't coach at all or is fully booked. Maybe he hasn't even thought about coaching and you can become his first padawan.
- He has to pick you up from where you are from the level of experience. You can quickly see whether the tips and tricks the coach gives you are tailored to your situation and help you in practice.



- He should react quickly to spontaneous questions. You often need advice in a specific situation and have to decide quickly. It is therefore important that your coach responds to your question promptly.

## **Manager**

“Deal with my manager!” - Only the big stars can say that, right? Far from it, even averagely known artists can be managed.

Why? Quite simply, so that there is more time for practice, concerts, songwriting, teaching and coaching.

Division of labor is the magic word.

Even if it’s hard to let go, at some point in your career you should get a manager.

Maybe a friend has a knack for organizing and chatting to people?

Additional advantages that result: more objectivity with regard to your work, higher bar, better negotiating ability when it comes to fees.

You might play for free or for a case of beer, but your manager is involved in the success and negotiates something.

Overall, the manager should always make you look good.

## **Booker**

Much of what you or your manager does, you can still; outsource.

Booking is a good example of this.

### **What is Booking?**

Has it anything to do with books? Nope, booking is organizing gigs. Nothing more, nothing less.

What are the advantages of getting a booker on board?

Clearly in the first place again division of labor, you actually want to make music and not make endless phone calls.

But that's exactly what bookers do, they cling to the phone and make gigs clear.

Since they (hopefully) do this full-time, they can fall back on many locations where they have already accommodated artists.

They already know exactly the huts and cities where your music can arrive, which you first have to find out through try and error.

Magic word: Connections

## **Backliner**

A band / artist on the way to success needs good staff.

In addition to coaches, managers and bookers, there are other interesting jobs in the music business.

### **What does a backliner do?**

First of all: the backline is all of the band's equipment, which they take with them to the gig, except for the sound system, i.e. guitar and bass amplifiers, drums, instruments and effects devices.

A backliner takes care of the band's backline; He makes sure, for example, that new strings are put on the guitar, new heads on the drums and new vocal cords on the singer before a concert.

He also sets up your stuff on stage, knows where the drums, guitar boxes, effects devices, etc. are going. Ideally, he can solder in case a cable breaks. He brings you the guitar perfectly tuned on stage and knows your songs and your sound preferences so far that he can also do a sound check for you in case you get stuck in a traffic jam.

In the beginning one backliner is definitely okay for the whole band and mostly replaces the singer when moving stuff. Little by little you should delegate more to simply clear your head for the show.

### **How do you get good staff?**

If you are teaching, just let your students help out; by letting them in on the secrets of everyday stage life and taking your time to explain, you are giving them a good return for their active help.

Really good backliners can even play your stuff on the instrument and replace you on stage in an emergency.

This is what happened at Metallica after James Hetfield's accident. Guitar technician John Marshall played rhythm guitar at a number of shows, while James only sang.

## **Merchandise**

What does the fan do when the concert is over? I agree!

He goes shopping at the merch stand. It should therefore be positioned in such a way that your fans are guaranteed to pass it when they go out.

My buddy Alex has a very nifty system with which he manages to attract people to the booth and make sure that they go home with more things than previously thought. How does he do that?

### **The merch pyramid**

Very easy: He gives out two or three things for a sum that are representative but not too expensive to produce. It's always free, right?

Then there are items for one euro. Nobody wastes money on it and likes to take something with them, almost in return for the gifts.

For example, he has an EP with him in a cardboard slipcase. Printed in color, really chic.

Then come the levels three euros and six euros.

There is also a jute bag with the band logo.

That makes people feel good because someone has already racked their brains about how to bring their purchases home elegantly. (Hardly anyone goes to a concert with shopping bags.)

The merchandise pyramid continues to build up, from the current album to the most expensive items, t-shirts and hoodies.

Of course, it also makes sense for someone to stand behind the stand during the concert, because your announcement should get people excited about your merch during the set.

Your wives / friends or the guys from the other bands can help out.

### **Lure**

If people are too far away from the stage during your concert, you can lure one or the other, by throwing a few merch items into the audience.

However, these should be objects that can also be easily caught. Lanyards, key rings, etc. are suitable here.

## **Insurance**

If you have now put all your money into equipment, you should make sure that you also cover the risk of dragging along.

Instrument or equipment insurance should definitely be included.

You can insure pretty much everything, even leaving your instruments lying around (no joke!).

It is also very important to secure storage in the car (especially overnight)

Occupational disability and accident insurance may go beyond the scope here; but you should go inside and ask yourself what it means if one day you are no longer able to do so should play your instrument.