

# **The Professional Musicians Bible**

## **A Guide to Acts Regarding Professional Expectations from Booking Customers**

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## Guidelines for Acts Performing for Whirlwind Entertainment

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The following document is a simple guideline we have created to allow a quick reference as to what venue's, patrons, agents and other entertainment organisers expect when they higher professional entertainment.

We have created this document to help all acts understand what is considered as [standard expectations of professional entertainers](#) regardless of whether you are solo performer or a large band / show.

## Receive Bookings & Pre Performance Preparation.

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### Contact

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- **1 person for the act should be contactable during business hours.** Usually nominating someone out of the group to take care of the bookings and a then a secondary contact is the best way.
- **If the contact is unavailable for a period let us know another person to call.**
- **Check your voice mail and SMS messages regularly.** Usually we are working on a time based deadline (sometimes under an hour). You may miss a potential booking because we have to confirm the booking immediately. **N.B. If we say it's urgent we need you to get back to us as soon as you get the message.**

### Bookings

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- **Always try to keep your booking diary close at hand** so you can confirm bookings efficiently when you get a call. This should make these calls as unobtrusive as possible.
- **If you are only 50% sure you will be available to take a booking, DON'T.** **Cancellations are worse for your reputation than being unavailable.**
- **If we keep an availability roster on your act you need to keep it up to date at all times.** **It damages our reputation as a professional agency if we say you are available on a date and then when we make the booking you are then not available.**
- **Do not cancel a booking because a better or more lucrative gig has been offered to you.** A booking is considered a commitment by you to perform at a venue on a specific date and time. **Customers will not make a booking if they know there's a chance it will be cancelled.** Once confirmed the customer will expend money and time promoting your performance and generating interest. We always work to get you the best bookings possible. Occasionally we will shuffle things around to get you a particular performance. This is only done with the express permission of all the customers involved and usually costs them and us money and time to change.
- **If you have to cancel a booking.** Whirlwind Entertainment understands that things go wrong and our lives can create issues that require a booking to be cancelled. If you have any problems **contact Whirlwind immediately** to discuss this. **The more time we have to find a solution the better we all look to the customers.** We will always work with all parties involved to get a problem fixed in the most professional manner possible.

## ***The Week of Your Performance***

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- **Complete your weekly check off as early in the week as possible.** This will mean any discrepancies are able to be fixed and sorted without any stress to you or us.
- **Fringe Benefits.** If there is accommodation, a meal, drinks provided, etc.. as part of the deal **YOU** must contact the customer or us to confirm that it has been taken into account. **If you are not utilising the benefit please contact the customer or Whirlwind so that it isn't kept aside for you on the night.**
- **Keep your head screwed on.** There's nothing worse than to receive a call on the day of a performance to be told an act can't play because a member was "out" last night, have been seriously hurt and now the act can't play.
- **Test your equipment.** **If you haven't used the equipment in a few weeks get it out, set it up and make sure it's working.** Showing up to a gig and setting up just to tell the customer a fuse has blown or a lead is broken and you can't fix it destroys the customer's confidence in you being a professional entertainer.
- **Check your car.** If you have to drive to your booking **make sure your vehicle is good to go.** Break downs or, heaven forbid a car accident resulting from lack of maintenance would leave you angry with yourself or the car owner/driver and/or leave the customer with no entertainment for the date.

## ***Receiving Fringe Benefits.***

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- **If you are receiving a fringe benefit as a part of the deal for your performance.** Confirm the details and arrangements on the week prior to your performance. **Don't wait till the actual night to minimise the possibility of a miscommunication.**
- **Fringe benefits can be a useful tool to get you a look in performance at a venue.** Be open to considering the package deals customers come up with. Knocking back a gig because you don't get enough money for it the first time may stop you ever playing in a venue. **Is it better to loose a little money to get a look in the door at the possibility of a regular rebooking than to not get a performance at all?**
- **Please respect the property of the customers who are employing you.** Please take the time and courtesy to look after any property either loaned to you by a customer or provided as a means of accommodation. If you do damage something don't try to "get away" with it. **Acknowledging a mistake will work more in your favour to create a loyal relationship with the customer than dishonesty or "sly" behaviour.**

## The Day of Your Performance

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### *During the Day*

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- **Get everything ready early.** Make sure all your gear is packed up and checked nice and early. **Stop any chance of forgetting something important because you were rushing out the door.** If you know you're going to be pressed for time getting from work to the booking perhaps consider packing everything the day before.
- **Please get to the venue a minimum of 1 hour prior to your performance time or earlier if you know you need it.** Customers get very scared if there is less than an hour to the performance time and they haven't seen or heard anything from the act. **Some customers will go the extreme of never rebooking an act if they consider you to be late.** It is considered a professional courtesy to be punctual at all times.
- **If you're running late.** Let the customer know your running late, your estimated time of arrival and the reason for your being late as soon as you know you're going to be late. **Don't leave the customer wondering what's going on and why haven't you arrived.**
- **Talk to your other members during the day to make sure all is well.** **Never rely on people to call you to tell you there's a problem.** 99% of people leave calling about a problem to the last minute. If you can find out before then you have a much better chance of solving it before it affects your booking or your reputation.
- **If you travel in the same car.** Make sure your car pooling arrangements are all organised and times for pickup are known by all. **Don't cause stress to the other members of your act by not being ready on time.** This is usually the main reason for people running late.
- **Professional Entertainers NEVER Show Signs of Inebriation.** **You would NEVER go to your day job high, drunk, coming down.** Please treat your professional entertainment career with the same respect.

## **Arriving at the Venue – Load In**

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- **Make a Note of the Name of the Contact / Duty Manager on the Date Performed.** This will allow you to give accurate reports in the event of a complaint or problem.
- **Announce Yourself Upon Arrival.** The first thing you should do when you arrive is find the **Duty Manager** and announce yourself. **This will give you the opportunity to find out any specific load in / load out requirements, volume restrictions, etc.** It will also stop the Duty Manager thinking about whether you have arrived or not. It will minimise any chance of you breaching a venue policy or local council law that might jeopardise your chances at rebooking or cause you to be fined.
- **Setup Your Gear First.** Get setup before you go and order a meal or anything else. This way you will be assured to start on time. **Some customers will refuse a rebooking if you start late.**
- **Plan Your Entry and Clear a Space Before You Unload.** Have a quick look around at your performance space and plan your access to it, **make sure there is enough room to get your equipment in and get it setup.** Usually this requires more room than the space taken up when you have completed setup. If you need to move furniture make sure you know the venue policies in regard to furniture placement. Whirlwind Entertainment recommends asking the staff themselves to move furniture, that way you're not responsible if it's in the wrong place or blocking a fire exit.
- **Adhere to OH&S Legislation.** Make yourself aware of your responsibilities in regards to Occupational Health & Safety. E.G. Tape cables that are run along the floor using **HIGH VISIBILITY TAPE.** **These are legal requirements laid out by the government, if you do something that is considered in breach of these practices and someone gets hurt you could find yourself in a large amount of legal and financial trouble.** Protect yourself and your assets from legal recourse.
- **The Duty Manager Is Always Right!** At times we get requests from Duty Managers that you might disagree with. The Duty Manager is the person ultimately responsible for the people in the venue. Whilst the request may seem strange usually there are good and legitimate reasons for it. **Ignoring a request made by the Duty Manager may result in a negative report and jeopardise further bookings in the venue.** This is a very common cause for acts not getting rebooked by a customer.
- **The Patrons.** Be aware that the patrons may be excited to see you are setting up. Whilst you have to keep them away from any possible danger and stop them from inhibiting you setting up and starting on time you want to remain approachable and friendly. **People want to feel welcomed when they are having a good time.**
- **The Bad Patrons.** Yes they are out there. **If you have a problem with a patron use the venue's security or a venue staff member to resolve the problem.** It is inadvisable to get into a disagreement with a patron at any time. Take the high moral ground and get security to remove them if necessary or get the Duty Manager to intercede and negate the conflict. If you get a little fiery or angry it will make you look like an amateur entertainer potentially damaging your reputation beyond repair.
- **Always Make the Customer Want You Back!** **This way you have bargaining power.** Then the choice is **yours** as to whether you rebook, negotiate or say no to any further bookings with that customer.

## Setup & Sound Check

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- **Check All Stacked Equipment is Stable and Won't Fall.**
- **Don't Use Duct / Gaff Tape on any of the Venue's Walls or Property. The floor is ok as long as it won't cause damage.** Venues are known to dock payments to bands to recoup the cost of damage. Best to ask before using anything that might cause damage.
- **Make Sure there is Enough Room for All Members to Fit Comfortably.**
- **Always complete a sound check.** Nothing to extravagant, just confirm you can hear all the instruments and that the volume isn't overbearing for the space. Adjust accordingly. You shouldn't have to spend a lot of time on this (The first song).
- **Clear Excess Out.** Take your empty cases and bags and anything else not used during performance back out to the vehicle or place it ALL neatly in one area. The more clutter around you on stage, the less appealing your Stage Image becomes.
- **Adhere to Venue Restrictions When Running Off a Venue Worksheet.** Sometimes venues are running events and they want a particular image displayed from the moment the patrons start to arrive. Adhering to these requests show's that you respect the venue and its requirements.
- **When Setting Volumes. Set You Maximum Then Turn Down Slightly.** This gives you the room to turn it up if needed as the night goes on. If you are already at the max and the venue fills right up, your volume will drop considerably. Many acts get denied a rebooking because the production wasn't used correctly.
- **Electricity.** Whilst very useful it is also VERY DANGEROUS! If you setup lights and other devices as well as your PA gear. Learn about electrical load and how it is affected by lights, PA's and assorted other devices. You don't want to be the person who started a fire in the walls or electrocuted themselves because they overloaded a circuit.
- **Using a Sound Engineer.** Just make sure they know what they are doing. A sound engineer can ruin your sound just as quick as make it better.
- **Tune Up.** Make sure everything is in tune BEFORE playing your first song. If you have multiple tuned instruments make sure to test the tuning between each instrument.

## It's Performance Time!

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### ***The First Set***

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- **Don't Start Late.** Punctuality is the most tell tale thing about a professional. **Many customers will be cranky if you do not start when they asked you to.**
- **Get Excited Before You Play.** **People want to see you having fun.** If you look like you aren't how are they supposed to have fun?
- **Start With a Bang.** **As a general rule people will remember the first and last songs on each set and nothing in the middle.** Therefore these 2 songs are the most important for sticking in a patron or Duty Managers mind. Especially in the case of the Duty Manager this may be the only time they stop and listen.
- **Use the Set to Feel Your Audience.** **The first set is your introduction to the people listening.** It is also your time to see what will get them involved. Keep this in mind when planning your set lists.
- **Stay Tight.** **Don't wast too much time deciding on the next song / talking to the audience.** Your music will speak louder than anything else you can do.

### ***Breaks***

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- **Be Consistent with Timing.** Unless you are working to a special request from a customer try to keep your set and break times consistent. Humans work best with routine. **By breaking your time up into consistent slots the evening will have a structured and professional feel.**

| <b><i>Suggested Set Times</i></b> |                   |                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Duration:</b>                  | <b>3 Hour</b>     | <b>3 ½ Hour</b>   | <b>4 Hour</b>     |
| <b>Sets:</b>                      | <b>3 / 45 Min</b> | <b>3 / 50 Min</b> | <b>4 / 40 Min</b> |
| <b>Breaks:</b>                    | <b>2 / 20 Min</b> | <b>2 / 30 Min</b> | <b>3 / 25 Min</b> |

- **Use Break Time Constructively.** While poker machines and pool tables are fun and they are a good way to pass time they can distract you or can be the cause of a conflict that would make you look bad.
- **Be Friendly and Approachable.** **If you're doing a good job people will most likely want to talk to you.** Take this as a compliment, as we all know they can be few and far between.
- **Check with Duty Manager.** Take a minute to see how the Duty Manager thinks the night is going. This gives them a chance to mention anything they might be thinking of before it culminates into something that might upset them. **It shows that you are proactive and working WITH the customer rather than FOR them.**

## ***The Last Set***

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- **Be Aware of Venue Restrictions and Directives.** Some venues have very specific directives on how they want the last set to take place. Be aware of these when starting your last set. **Don't ruin a good night in the last 10 minutes.**
- **The Patrons.** Remember they have been out for a while now and are probably very "merry". **Be patient and polite at all times.** The customer is probably watching.
- **Don't Play Over Time.** Unless the customer has specifically said it's permitted stick to the times outlined in your booking. **Some customers run the entertainment right to the minute they are licensed to stop.** Running over may result in a fine and an unhappy customer. If you know your going to run over, check with the customer.
- **Encores.** Plan your encore to fit in with the time restrictions of your booking. While they look and feel great you don't want to perform longer than you're booked for.

## ***Patrons – Dealing with the Public***

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- **Be Polite and Courteous.** The patrons that go to pubs, clubs, events, etc. are the people that are paying your bills. Even though they are not directly employing you the patron is the reason the customer wants the entertainment.
- **Be Approachable and Friendly.** **Make the patrons feel like you want to talk to them and you appreciate that they took the time to speak to you.** Always keep your professional image in mind when dealing with people; you never know who they might be.
- **Don't Get Drawn Into Conflict.** You are a professional and there to do a job. If you are in a situation where you feel like conflict may arise just say "Sorry Mate, I've just got to go prepare." Or something similar and remove yourself from the situation. If the patron follows wanting to continue, head towards the closest staff member or security guard, it will be obvious to anyone watching you are trying to exit the situation.
- **You Never Know Who You're Talking To.** You never know who has come to see how you are for a booking they are considering making.

## ***Your Image – How You Look from the Outside***

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- **Personal Image.** First impressions are your best selling tool. **Don't ruin it before you have even said a word.** Wear clothes appropriate to the type of venue you are playing in. Be aware of dress codes / restrictions. Use your best judgement or ask the customer directly if you are unsure.
- **Stage Image.** This is how you look when you are performing. **If someone took a photo at anytime during your performance what would it look like?** Take into account the visual side of your performance. Many of us are visual people and having a great mental picture of your act will help people remember you over time.
- **Professional Image.** This is how you look to customers. When you're employed as an entertainer people are watching your behaviour constantly. Keep in mind **"It takes years to build a good reputation and seconds to destroy it."**

## Winding the Evening Up

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### Getting Paid

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- **The Best Time to Ask For Payment.** Depending on the type of payment option being used by the customer will always determine your approach to payment. Unless otherwise arranged Whirlwind Entertainment makes the following recommendations for approaching a customer.
  - Public Booking:**
    - Have invoice ready at end of last set.
    - Give invoice directly to Duty Manager and take note of their name and the time.
  - Private Booking:**
    - If invoice is required have it by the end of the first set.
    - Approach the customer during your first break and ask for the payment. This will stop any confusion at the end of the evening trying to find a customer who may be inebriated.
- **Payment Disputes.** If there is a payment dispute when it comes time to collect your money try to resolve the problem professionally without resorting to creating a conflict situation. If the issue cannot be resolved in a civil manner remove yourself professionally and contact Whirlwind Entertainment for mediation. We will endeavour to come to the fairest solution for all parties involved.
- **Working Over Time.** If the customer wants you to play over time make sure you clearly state on your invoice the over time payment and the person authorising it. This will negate any possible confusion when it comes time for payment.

### Leaving the Venue – Packing Up / Load Out

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- **Start Packing Up Immediately.** Some venues have strict guidelines on the time it takes you to load out. Talk to people while you are packing up if necessary to remain approachable and friendly.
- **Don't Let Patrons Help.** Even if you are worn out don't let a member of the public help you with anything. If they hurt themselves you do not want to be responsible if that situation occurs.
- **Have a Load Out Plan.** Plan your load out at the same time you plan your load in. Know where the exit you must use is and make sure there is a path free of obstacles. If necessary request for a staff member or a security guard to help keep patrons away from your loading areas.
- **Be Patient.** Usually by the end of the night people aren't as capable. Take care that you do not hurt anyone when moving your equipment through a crowd. Don't push, generally people will see you have something and make room for you.
- **Announce That You Are Leaving.** After you have cleared your equipment from the performance space and are ready to leave. Find the Duty Manager to let them know you have completed load out and that you are leaving the venue. This gives you an opportunity to get a feel on how you went and discuss any issues that may have arisen during the night. It shows the customer that you are aware that their opinion is important and allows you to be better prepared for a rebooking.

## Points We Would Like You to Consider

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### ***Groupies – Your Mates that Come to Support You***

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- **Taking Friends to Your Bookings.** If a friend arrives with you make sure they are aware that their behaviour will directly reflect on your professional image. If they get into a situation where the customer removes them from the premises will directly jeopardise your chances at continual bookings. **Get your friends to arrive separately if possible.** This way the customer won't directly associate them with your act if there is a problem during the evening.
- **The Fans.** Once you have been established for a period you may find you have started to build a "following". **Be careful to include the entire audience in the venue.** Don't leave anyone out when building your repour.

### ***Things that may Ruin Your Chances for Rebooking***

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- **Taking Alcohol into Licensed Premises.** Taking alcohol into licensed premises for consumption is against the law. **If a customer is aware that you have done this in most cases you will be refused any rebooking.** It could also cause problems on your night of performance.
- **Making Suggestions.** Even though you have much experience as an entertainer, **take care to appear respectful and objective when making suggestions about anything to do with the running of the evening.** People like to feel important and that they are in control.
- **Looking too Comfortable.** **Put 110% into every performance you do.** Even if you don't think it matters if you return to a venue, be aware that Venue Managers change and someone that was managing a venue you didn't like might end up managing one you do. You don't want to ruin any chance for a booking because you were dismissive with a booking in the past.
- **You're Only as Good as Your Last Performance.** Customers, agents, venue managers and entertainment managers all love to talk to each other. **If you have a bad night people will be talking about it.**

## What Equipment Should I Take to Each Gig

| <b>BAND</b>   |  |
|---|--|
| Production:   | A quality PA to suite the room in which you are performing.  |
| Lighting:<br><small>(Minimum)</small>                                       | 6 Separate Coloured Lights (E.G. Par 64 or Par 56)<br>Colour Suggestion:<br>Red, Blue, Green, Purple, etc... Soft colours not harsh.               |
| Sound Engineer:   | If Required (Use a trained professional only)  |
| Audio Engineer:   | If Required (Use a trained professional only)  |
| Recommended:<br><small>(To make you stand out from the rest)</small>        | A chaser or footswitch control. (Can be controlled by a band member)<br>Strobe light<br>Smoke machine<br>Act Banner (Something to hang behind you) |
| <b>DUO</b>  |  |
| Production:   | A quality PA to suite the room in which you are performing.  |
| Lighting:<br><small>(Minimum)</small>                                       | 3 Separate Coloured Lights (E.G. Par 64 or Par 56)<br>Colour Suggestion:<br>Red, Blue, Green, Purple, etc... Soft colours not harsh.               |
| Sound Engineer:   | No   |
| Audio Engineer:   | No   |
| Recommended Extras:<br><small>(To make you stand out from the rest)</small> | A chaser or footswitch control. (Can be controlled by a band member)<br>Strobe light<br>Smoke machine<br>Act Banner (Something to hang behind you) |
| <b>SOLO</b>   |  |
| Production:   | A quality PA to suite the room in which you are performing.  |
| Lighting:<br><small>(Minimum)</small>                                       | 3 Separate Coloured Lights (E.G. Par 64 or Par 56)<br>Colour Suggestion:<br>Red, Blue, Green, Purple, etc... Soft colours not harsh.               |
| Sound Engineer:   | No   |
| Audio Engineer:   | No   |
| Recommended Extras:<br><small>(To make you stand out from the rest)</small> | A chaser or footswitch control. (Can be controlled by a band member)<br>Strobe light<br>Smoke machine<br>Act Banner (Something to hang behind you) |
| <b>DJ</b>   |  |
| Production:   | A quality PA to suite the room in which you are performing.  |
| Lighting:<br><small>(Minimum)</small>                                       | 3 Separate Coloured Lights (E.G. Par 64 or Par 56)<br>Colour Suggestion:<br>Red, Blue, Green, Purple, etc... Soft colours not harsh.               |
| Sound Engineer:   | No   |
| Audio Engineer:   | No   |
| Recommended Extras:<br><small>(To make you stand out from the rest)</small> | A chaser or footswitch control. (Can be controlled by a band member)<br>Strobe light<br>Smoke machine<br>Act Banner (Something to hang behind you) |