

## BUILD YOUR BAND

Going it alone in your job shopping can be tough. Just as musicians have a band to help them, you too can build a band to help you find the right job. Your band can provide you with networks, support, promotion and encouragement to really improve your chances of success. Think about the goals you wish to achieve – either now or in that ideal job you're heading towards. Now answer the questions overleaf to help you identify your support group – the band members who can help you achieve this goal.

When answering each question:

Think of everybody you've known throughout your life – whether in your working, learning, playing and giving.

Think of everybody they know eg. friends of friends, colleagues' friends, parents etc.

Think of people you don't yet know but would love to meet and add them to the list.

Under each title in the diagram is a space for you to write the names of people who can fill those roles in your own life.



## **BAND MEMBERS**

Who are the key members of your band – the drummers and bass guitar players who give your life its tempo and rhythm? Which vocalists provide a lead, who else fills in with the keyboards, backs you up and helps drive you forward?

## **MUSIC/SONGWRITER**

Who can help you develop the ‘words and music’ to describe the life you want and adapt them as your future unfolds?

## **MANAGER**

Who gives you the will, drive and guidance to achieve your goals? Who cheers you up – or gives you a kick up the backside – when needed?

## **PROMOTER**

Who can get you in the right place at the right time? Who has the best knowledge of your fan base? Who can champion you and sell your achievements? Who are the best networkers you can learn from?

## **IDOLS**

Who are the people who’ve reached where you want to be in life? Which role models and mentors really inspire you?

## **ROADIES**

Who does the spadework that ensures things happen for you? Who carries you through the ups and downs of life? Who provides the security and says ‘no’ to other peoples’ agendas? Who do you take for granted?

## **SOUND/LIGHTING ENGINEER**

Who mixes what you have to sell in the best way possible? Who helps you pitch at the right level? Who makes you sound, feel and look good?

## **RECORD PRODUCER**

Who do you know who sees the bigger picture and spots winners? Who can spread your talents across wider networks and channels? Who can generate sustainable income for you?

## **FAN BASE**

Whose positive support, encouragement and feedback can keep you going? Who can you talk to about the future needs of your fan base? Who provides financial and emotional sustainability?

## **GET SHOPPING!**

Now you know where to find the backing you need, it’s time to get your band playing to your tune. Here are the top ten tips to build your group and make it work for you. Remember that you may need to bring in ‘guest musicians’ over time as your priorities change.

Put a tick against all those tips you think you can realistically use (for future reference).

### **JAM WITH FRIENDS.**

Find your core band members – people with similar passions and interests you could work on together – and practice with them. Talk about your ideas with friends, family, colleagues, neighbours, friends’ parents, and friends of friends, anybody you respect or who has expertise or influence in your field. The more people looking and listening for possibilities the better.

### **GET THE RIGHT GROUPIES.**

Hang around positive people who give you energy. Spend too much time with negative people and you become one yourself. Only a handful of people will really listen to you and take an interest in your well-being so treasure those who love and labour for you. Remember that building your support group is a two-way process – everybody has the same needs for support so try giving as much or more than you are getting. Revive old relationships and thank people who have helped you.

### **BE A SUPPORT ACT.**

Volunteer to help someone you

admire. Use every opportunity to hang out with people you respect and can learn from. Start in safe environments by helping out friends, then volunteer for some work experience and try then to spend more time with people in your ideal role. Build up slowly and be prepared for the long haul.

### **GET RID OF THOSE NEGATIVE TRACKS.**

We all have dreary old tracks playing in our heads – “I can’t do that, I’m not confident enough; I’m too old, fat, thin, small, tall etc.” It gets even worse when we think of approaching other people – “They’ll say no, laugh at me or think I’m stupid.” The truth is anybody worth spending time with will be willing to help you out in some small way. So change the tune to “I can, they will, we’ll do...”

### **LISTEN TO YOUR FAVOURITE ARTISTS.**

Carry out information interviews with people in roles you’d love to be in. Ask them to tell their story of the ups and downs of their journey, possibilities they see in the future and who else they suggest you speak to.

### **PRACTICE COVER VERSIONS.**

Try copying the style of successful networkers. Where do they hang out? What do they sound like? Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse before going live – plan out which people you need to talk to, prepare the questions you need to ask and always be ready to improvise.

### **HIRE A RECORDING STUDIO.**

Find safe environments where you can demonstrate your skills but gain critical feedback (from the ‘sound engineers and producers’) before going live. You could take on voluntary work, ask critical friends for feedback, check your CV with people in the know, get a mock interview

and rehearse information interviews with friends.

### **GET A GIG.**

Go for an early win with a small challenge or project which brings together a group of like-minded people. Try organising a party, trip out or team sporting event, anything that involves building relationships – every successful band started in a small club. Treat strangers as potential new friends and put yourself in places where you can meet new people.

### **PERFORM ON A BIGGER STAGE.**

The biggest risk is not setting high targets and missing but setting low ones and reaching them. Keep playing back your successful tracks – ie. review your successes and aim even higher. Avoid being a one-hit-wonder and think in terms of a successful album. Think of all the things you’d love to do in life and ask the people who can help. Think big. If you want an information interview, ask the MD – if they are not free they’ll probably find a colleague.

### **KEEP PLAYING YOUR FAVOURITE TRACKS.**

Remain true to yourself and your ideals. Re-check your vision and be honest about what really matters to you. Are you living your own life or someone else’s expectations of you? Have you really shared your dreams with your core band members in the past three months? Are you working actively together towards joint goals? Do you have the right life support group around you?