

## **PRODUCTION MANAGER STAGE MANAGER AND TOUR MANAGER ARTIST LIAISON MANAGER AND PRESS OR PR OFFICER**

### Overview

The job of Production Manager is to take overall control of a show, performance, event or installation, including budget, timing, personnel, equipment rental and structural decisions. The Production Manager is a key link in the chain of legal responsibility for the Health & Safety of all workers and operations, and is required to ensure that the health & safety policy of the company they're working for is adhered to e.g. staff are trained for the jobs they carry out and that safe working practices followed.

The Production Manager is the single most important and influential member of the production team. They must be aware of every development in the production process; keeping tabs on its cost, schedule and viability

Production Managers usually work in one of two ways; either as a regular employee of an organisation whose job it is to oversee specific projects; or, more commonly as a freelancer who is employed on a short term contract to co-ordinate particular events or performances such as a tour or festival. If they fall into the latter category they must make sure they possess adequate Public Liability/Employers/Professional Indemnity Insurance for the work they intend to carry out.

### Consultation & Pre-Planning

Usually a Production Manager will be appointed early in the development of a project. They will often work with a client in developing key design and event concepts. To do this effectively the Production Manager will have excellent written and verbal communication skills. They must be capable of rapidly grasping the requirements of the client/project and should be able to make practical suggestions as to how the project might be realised.

A thorough understanding of the journey from concept to presentation is vital. At this stage the client will be looking for:

- Realistic scheduling - how long will each stage of the process take
- Outline budgeting, or an idea of what is possible within the budget offered
- What number and type of staff will be required to undertake the work satisfactorily
- The venue or performance structure required to stage the event
- Any legal or regulatory obligations that need to be addressed
- An estimate of the type of hardware required for the event

It is often difficult to give definitive answers to all these questions, but a basic (and fundamentally accurate) estimate will be required by the client, agent or Promoter

### Production Planning

During the planning stage the Production Manager will investigate and make basic decisions on:

- The production schedule, who will do what and when.
- Begin the process of drawing up a technical specification for the production, this should be as detailed as possible, and should include an idea of the weight and volume of equipment used as this will have serious implications for transport logistics.

- Budget allocation: how much will be available to spend on the various areas of the production.
- Venue booking. rehearsal and performance venues should be booked.
- In the instance of touring shows major transport logistics should be addressed. How much equipment needs to travel, how many people, how long will it take to get there, and to clear customs. Is it more efficient to calculate on the basis of weight or volume? Is there time to send stuff via sea, or does it have to fly?
- Appointment of key personnel
- Conducting planning meetings

### Health & Safety

As the main conduit for information pertaining to a show, the Production Manager is in a unique position to oversee the health and safety provision for all people working on the event and for audiences. In order to fulfil this key role adequately they must:

- Understand the safety policy statement of the company by whom they are employed, or for whom they are working.
- Have thorough grasp of H and S issues affecting the performance industry and the given production in particular.
- Identify any specific hazards and outline ways to minimise Risk.
- Be familiar with legislation such as HSW Act
- Familiar with advisory documents such as the Event Safety Guide or "Pop Code" and industry ACOP's
- Have in place a system for H&S management
- Have an understanding of how to draw up practical, relevant and realistic Risk Assessments
- Draw up Risk Assessments for all jobs & operations to be undertaken that present a significant risk to personnel or equipment.
- Ensure documentation is kept.
- Ensure that all staff are informed of H and S issues that may affect them.
- Ensure that staff are adequately trained for the work they undertake.
- Ensure staff are aware of their legal obligations.
- Ensure sub-contractors are competent and have necessary insurance, documentation etc. to carry out the job.
- Ensure adequate provision is made for H&S inspection.
- Establish a system for monitoring H&S.
- Institute an awareness of H&S issues among staff & encourage a safety culture within production team.

### Contracts

Whilst the drawing up of contracts for personnel may be carried out by a specialist Personnel Dept. it is important that the Production Manager keeps tabs on who is employed and under what conditions. They must ensure that contracts issued:

- Are legal & binding and are signed. Remember a verbal contract may also be binding.
- That they are issued to all people working on the production.
- That they accurately reflect the work to be undertaken and are free from ambiguity.

- That contracts do not exceed allocated budgets.
- Do not bind either party to an agreement they are unable to keep.
- Work hours, times, dates and places are clearly specified.
- That the tax and NI position is clearly defined.
- Times and methods of payment are agreed.

### Sub-contractors

The Production Manager is responsible for appointing sub contractors to undertake specific areas of work. Such contractors may have a short and transient role, such as a catering contractor, or they may be a core part of the project development such as a stage design company. In either instance the Production Manager is responsible for ensuring:

- That all appropriate jobs are put out to tender, that written quotes are received for particular operations and that clear production parameters are put to companies tendering.
- The suitability for any contractor for the operation to be performed.
- That the contractor is actually *contracted* to carry out a particular service.
- The precise time, date and place of deliver of equipment or services is clearly identified.
- What penalties the contractor might incur should they fail to meet the terms of the contract - esp. lateness or failure to produce acceptable results.
- Remember that the figure charged by a contractor is negotiable until it is fixed by contract
- The contractor must provide Employers' Liability insurance for their own workers, and Public Liability insurance to cover others. Professional Indemnity & Product Liability might also be applicable.
- The Contractor must provide Risk Assessments for all the operations the plan to carry out, and must inform you if their activities present a health & safety risk to any other persons.
- Contractors with more than five employees should have a written health & safety policy statement. Make sure you get to see it before any contract is signed.
- Contractors must supply appropriate PPE for all their workers. Make sure the contractor is aware that you're not going to do it for them.
- Ensure that all staff provided are adequately trained for the jobs they undertake.

### Contingency and Emergency Planning

As part of the Risk Assessment process the Production Manager should draw up, in consultation with relevant personnel or external bodies, plans for:

- Venue evacuation, coded messages & warnings
- The role played by individual staff members in the event of emergency
- The deployment of emergency services
- Access of emergency service vehicles and staff
- The provision of adequate first aid and fire fighting equipment
- A system for monitoring the progress of events during an emergency
- A system for communicating information between key staff
- Any other contingency plans as may be required

## Personnel

The Production Manager is responsible for the most part for the hiring and firing of people working on the production. This may vary from key personnel to casual workers, but in every instance the Production Manager should be aware of the legal responsibilities they have with regard to staff:

- Ensure that anyone taken on to do work of any kind, no matter how short the duration, is covered by employers liability insurance. Make sure the policy covers people for the kinds of jobs they'll be doing.
- Ensure that proper contracts are issued, preferably one modelled on the PSA approved contract.
- Make sure people take on understand the terms and conditions of their employment, its duration, the rate of pay and so on.
- Identify key staff posts e.g. Site Manager, Stage Manager, Technical Manager and appoint people to posts in consultation with client.
- Ensure appointees understand key production concepts and their role within the team.
- Ensure that sufficient people are employed to undertake the job safely and within the constraints set by the budget and the production schedule.
- Establish a system whereby staff suggestions, complaints and incident reports can be made.
- Ensure you meet the various duties you have as an employer under the 1974 Health & Safety at Work Act, and associated legislation.

## Communication

Clear communication between a variety of staff, sub-contractors, local authorities, statutory bodies, clients & artists is vital to any successful production. A great deal of information will flow through the Production Manager, so it is important a system exists for speeding its passage.

- Make sure you have contact numbers, addresses etc. for all production staff, crew, contractors and so on. Log the information in a central register or book. Don't rely on a million Post-Its on the walls of the office.
- Make sure sufficient money has been allocated from the budget to meet the communication needs of the production.
- Set up a Production Office so that information is collected and disseminated from a central point. Make sure everyone knows how to contact that office.
- Ensure that people working on the event know what they are supposed to do, when, where and how much they can spend getting it done.
- Try to standardise as much as possible. Use a similar format for budgets or schedule updates, and try to use the same software as others to facilitate file transfer.
- Where possible use an assistant or secretary to answer phone calls and mail - it's easy to get bogged down in conversations that should have been fielded by other staff or that are simply a waste of time.
- Use a variety of methods to communicate complex information, flow charts, diagrams & annotations can a lot easier to understand than plain text. Always remember to use an indication of scale on plots, plans and drawings.
- Always keep back ups of material held on computer hard drives.

- Try to maintain open communication with key staff so important information is relayed quickly.
- Establish a system of regular production meetings to monitor progress and pass on new information, tasks or deadlines.
- Learn to delegate. The Production Managers' role is to oversee work rather than to undertake it all.

### Scheduling

The Production Manager is responsible for drawing up the overall production schedule, and for ensuring that personnel and sub-contractors abide by it. The production schedule is a crucial management tool that requires considerable thought. It should include detailed information on the following

- The overall timetable of production work, ranging from design and development stages through building to rehearsals and performance.
- The schedule indicates when and where staff are required and will be central to accurate budgeting as well as the drawing up of contracts.
- The schedule will indicate when certain operations must be put into action for example stage construction, so that other work like lighting rigging will not conflict. It will also set out the timetable for dealing with licensing, police, EHO's and so on.
- The schedule allows contracts and subcontracted services to be booked for the correct period, as well as venues, transport and so on.
- The schedule set performance and completion targets for production work. It may form the basis of penalty clauses for failure to complete work undertaken by sub-contractors.
- As the production process develops the schedule will be constantly amended, becoming more detailed as the event gets closer. Instead of broad brushstrokes it will finely detail the activity of production crew. Other staff such as Tour and Stage managers will also produce production schedules to add more detail to their specific area.
- Once the show is running or the tour is out the Production Manager needs to constantly monitor the schedule to ensure it is viable and being adhered to
- A Production schedule is of little use unless it's widely distributed. Key personnel should have copies, and should be informed of changes and updates.

### Budgeting

The Production Manager is responsible for overseeing total expenditure on a production. This involves agreeing the budget available with the producer or agent, allocation of budgets to different headings. This division should then be written up and will form the basis of expenditure targets for the various departments. When drawing up a budget it is vital that:

- The figures add up and that any excess of expenditure over income is identified and understood.
- Budgets should be written up clearly with expenditure grouped into types rather than each individual expense being listed.
- All expenditure should be accounted for, as should any income.

- Income and expenditure should be listed on separate sheets.
- Times of income & expenditure should be analysed to create a cash-flow forecast.
- Brutal honesty is required when drawing up and allocating budgets. Always keep things as tight as possible, overestimate costs rather than underestimate.
- Always allow a contingency of at least 5% for unexpected circumstances.
- Once on tour accurate budget updates should be made after every show, or at least once a week to calculate how expenditure is balancing with income.

Large tours and events will often have a specialist accountant to look after all aspects of finance.

### Documentation

A certain amount of documentation will be produced by a production. This will fall into several categories.

- Firstly, there will be a production file containing all the **legal information** and forms, including Insurance Certificates, Policy Statements, Risk Assessments, fireproofing certificates, public entertainment license documents and so on. This folder should be kept safely in the Production Office and should not be available for general use. It should be available upon request from Local Authority, Police and HSE inspectors.
- More general but important documentation such as budgets, contracts, tender bids schedules etc. are commercially sensitive and should be kept securely.
- Minutes of production meetings and other relevant staff meetings should be kept and filed.
- Artists, managers, agents and promoters will expect to see final budgets & reconciliation's. These can only be done if accurate records are kept throughout the process.
- A petty cash book should be kept, and money only paid out when receipts are presented with the relevant budget indicated.
- A daily log of income and expenditure should be kept once the production is running, or the show is out on tour.
- A final set of accounts should be presented along with a brief analysis of the production and how it progressed.

### Accountability

- Although the key figure in the production process the Production Manager is not a law unto themselves. They are accountable to:
  - The production company or promoter who has put up the finance
  - The artist for whom they are working.
  - The Production Director whose artistic vision is being realised.
- Most importantly the Production Manager is accountable in Law for the actions of their staff and subcontractors. Sloppy work on the part of a crew member could lead to an accident, but the Production Manager might find themselves in court for not training personnel, or informing them of correct procedure.

### Technical Understanding

The Production Manager should be thoroughly familiar with all technical aspects of production. They should understand the terminology and the processes involved, although not necessarily the minutiae of every operation.

- The Production Manager is responsible for drawing up a full technical rider for the event and so must have a thorough grasp of all technical issues relating to the production.
- Often the Production Manager will be in the role of assessing contracts and tenders for technical services, they should understand the contents of such contracts, or at least be aware of the limits of their knowledge so specialists might be brought in to advise.
- During the production process it may be necessary to chivvy people along or make shortcuts, or chop out unnecessary expenditure. It is only with a good underpinning knowledge that the Production Manager can tackle staff and contractors on these issues.
- A thorough knowledge of how the law relates to technical aspects of production is crucial. The Production Manager really should be familiar with regulations regarding employment, temporary structures, electricity at work, manual handling, weather, plant operation and waste disposal regulations. They should understand the risks and dangers to which workers and contractors are exposed and takes “all steps practicable” to eliminate them.

### Authority Liaison

It is up to the Production Manager to ensure that the criteria for Entertainment Licenses and any other certificate required by the production are met. They must

- Liaise with Local Authority, Police, Fire, Ambulance and HSE officers to ensure they are satisfied with the progress of the event.
- The Production Manager must be proactive in making contact with authorities and in seeking their suggestions, requirements and ultimate approval.
- Compliance must be ensured with all criteria set by Licensing Authorities etc. It's no good just agreeing with everything they ask for - you must make sure such requests are acted upon.
- All certificates, Risk Assessments and legal documents must be made available upon request by Local Authority or HSE inspecting officers

## **STAGE MANAGER**

### Overview

The role of Stage Manager is essentially a practical one, they are responsible for overseeing any activity that takes place on, adjacent to, or behind the stage or performance area. This involves the construction of stage elements, (risers etc.), the positioning of equipment, stairways access points and the flow of people and materials on and off the stage. The Stage Manager is responsible for issues of Health and Safety in the immediate environs of the stage and backstage area. During rehearsal and performance the Stage Manager ensures the smooth running of the show and that equipment, props and people are in the right place at the right time. In complex shows the Stage Manager may “call” the show by means of a show book containing cues & movements.

The Stage Manager generally has one or more assistants and deputies, who are under their direction. They might be responsible for procuring equipment & refreshments and so will undertake an element of production accounting. They will generally report to the Production Manager.

### The Stage

The Stage Manager is responsible for the overall layout and physical preparation of the stage and all its settings. In practice this will mean working with lighting, sound and staging companies as well as artists to create the desired performance environment. This will involve:

- Drawing up and interpreting scale plans
- Identifying the types of stage, set, backline, PA and lighting equipment that may be in use
- Establishing, in consultation with others the desired layout of the stage
- Ensuring adequate access is provided for artists and crew and that emergency exit points are clearly marked
- Ensuring that access ways are kept clear of trip hazards in the form of cables, lamps, stands etc., and that stage itself (as far as is reasonably practicable) is clear of obstruction.
- Ensuring that unnecessary objects and materials are removed from the stage e.g. flight-cases, cans and bottles.
- Regulating the work undertaken on stage to ensure no dangerous situations arise, for example riggers working overhead when crew are working below.
- Check that the structure of the stage is sound, and that ramps, steps and edges are marked and have adequate railing to prevent both people and rolling flight-cases from falling.
- Regulate access to the stage itself, ensuring that only people who genuinely need access have it.
- The stage must be kept free of liquids - electricity & drinks don't mix. Only essential performance refreshments should be allowed onstage.

### Backstage

The backstage area is often used as a dumping ground for spare equipment and cases. The Stage Manager must ensure the backstage is kept orderly, that fire exits are not blocked and there is room to move freely.

- Backstage is a holding area for artists and crew who have to enter or leave stage. Entrances & exits should be clearly marked, and specific areas designated for performers waiting to go on.
- Fire exits should be kept clear and signs should not be obscured.
- Fire control points should be readily accessible.
- Access to the backstage area should be regulated in the same manner as the stage itself - only authorised persons should be given access

### Personnel

Should the Stage Manager have assistants it is necessary to demark clear areas of responsibility and for the Stage Manager to establish work methods, set standards of good

practice, and institute a workable system of communication in order for things to progress smoothly. Clear instruction must be given to stage hands and casual crew.

The Stage Manager will be accountable to the Production Manager who will set overall schedules and budgets. The Stage & Production Managers should meet on a daily basis to discuss progress of the event.

### Scheduling

The Production Manager will set the overall schedule for the production process, but as things get closer to performance the Stage Manager will begin to take a more active role in timekeeping and scheduling - since activity increasingly revolves around the stage itself.

- The Stage Manager will set access times to the stage and regulate the personnel or contractors working on it.
- Potentially dangerous situations where incompatible work is being carried out by different contractors will be avoided by scheduling access times
- During rehearsals the Stage Manager will keep notes of running times, order changes, backline requirements and so on.
- Cue points for reveals, motors, trucks and so on will be recorded and timed.
- Ensure that performance activity on stage complies with agreed start and finish times.
- Ensure bands understand how much time they are allowed.

### Communication

To a great extent good stage management revolves around effective communication. It is hard to overstate the need for a flow of precise, clear and timely information.

- The Stage Manager must hold regular meetings with key production staff. They must ensure that changes in ideas, schedules and budgets are communicated to the appropriate people. Meeting must be chaired, and should be kept as short as is necessary to convey the information required. Long rambling meetings that degenerate into general discussions are of little use.
- A good Stage Manager is adept at communicating in writing, verbally or by means of scale plans and drawings.

### Health & Safety

The Stage Manager must take day to day responsibility for health & safety matters relating to the stage and people working on it. Since the SM is physically in situ they must ensure that safety policy is actually carried out whilst work is in progress; there's no point in the Production Manager undertaking a paper exercise about safety plans if it's ignored on the ground. Ensuring compliance with safety regulations can be a very difficult task - especially given the prevailing culture in the industry - and the SM will need to use diplomacy and good communication skills. The kind of things they should check for are:

- Check all rigging points (lighting, video and PA) have safety backups. Round-slings must have a steel secondary.
- Check all lamps and any other equipment that may require it is fitted with safety chains and that they are correctly used.

- Check that stage ballast/kintelledge is in place and secure.
- Ensure that adequate fire fighting equipment is in position and not covered or obscured.
- Ensure that appropriate extinguishers are available near electrical or flammable liquid hazards.
- Check extinguishers are full and serviced. Report and re-order if an extinguisher is used.
- Designate a crew member to keep the area (including below stage) free of combustible materials.
- Keep the stage in a generally tidy condition. Provide sufficient litter bins. Keep drinks and foodstuff off the stage.
- Confine drinks and liquids to one safe area of the sage away from electrical items. Other than essential crew and performance drinks all other drinks and liquids are banned from directly on stage. Persons with stage access can assist by not bringing drinks onto the stage. Half full bottles, cans and glasses are a real problem as well as a hazard. Before equipment changeovers, all cans, bottles and glasses should be removed from the stage by an appointed crew member.
- Ensure steps, treads and ramps to stage are adequate for access and secure. Mark edges with white gaffa tape or a strip of white paint.
- During build and breakdown, arrange for the edge of stage to be taped or fenced off.
- With international acts it is not uncommon for multi-voltage back line drops to be provided. Stage Managers have a responsibility to brief all crew and other interested parties if such supplies are provided and to give warnings to check connections equipment before connecting to the supply.
- Stage Managers must be aware of the conditions of the Entertainment License and curfew times so that the show runs strictly to time. Stage and house/arena managers must remain in contact. "Doors" should not open until the Stage Manager has given clearance that it is safe to open "doors" The show should not start until the "house" has given clearance.
- Ensure safety signs are erected warning of dangers, fire and exit points. Most sound stages will produce enough noise to fall under the Noise at Work first Action Level. Ensure noise warning signs are erected and that hearing protection is provided for people working onstage.
- The front of stage pit will probably exceed the Noise at Work second Action Level, in which case hearing protection must be provided and MUST be worn.
- Ensure that hard hat area signs are posted when work is being undertaken overhead.
- Ensure that everyone working on stage uses the appropriate PPE, steel toe boots, gloves, hardhats, ear protection etc. Enforce compliance.
- No one must climb or work at height until permission has been given by the Stage Manager. Ensure that riggers, or people climbing wear and use the required fall restraint equipment inc. full body harnesses that conform to CE standards. No-one

should work onstage beneath riggers, and spare equipment that may worsen injury following a fall should be removed.

- Ensure that cables do not prevent a trip hazard and do not lay across steps, stairways or access routes. At outdoor gigs where cables and multicores may be trenched, mark off the trench with tape and stakes - this will avoid trips and people mistakenly driving across cables.
- Ensure adequate work lights are in position for night work and “load out”.
- Stage Managers must ensure that flight cases (including empty cases) are stacked or stored in a safe manner that does not block or obscure fire exits, emergency routes or fire fighting equipment.
- Ensure that all performers and crew are aware of special effects including strobes, lasers, UV, smoke and vapour. Everyone must know the position of pyrotechnics and the times they are to be operated. UV lighting must be rigged at least 16ft. from crew and performers. Ensure warning notices are in position if UV and strobes are in use. Ensure a competent person is positioned by all smoke and vapour effect machines during use.
- The Stage Manager is responsible for ensuring that emergency messages can be broadcasted from the stage. In the event of an evacuation the Stage Manager should have in place a procedure for stopping an artist and making an announcement to staff and public. Stage Managers have a duty to ensure emergency messages are passed to the Compare, DJ or Conductor to read out as soon as possible. (Evacuation notices will be read out immediately). The messages must be treated seriously. All messages should be checked by the Event Manager/Production Manager or Safety Manager to ensure only genuine emergency messages are passed to the Stage Manager. Coded messages may be used.
- Following such an announcement the Stage Manager must ensure that agreed evacuation procedures are carried out. All performers, staff and crew must leave the area immediately via the emergency exits - just like the punters.
- Ensure that other key staff are aware of the situation e.g. the Production Manager, and that the emergency services have been called.
- Ensure that the stage and backstage areas are kept free of unnecessary personnel. This includes press, photographers, record company staff, agents, artists friends, family and managers etc. Stewards backstage will also assist with the task if requested. Press, guests and photographers must not be sent to the Pit Area, this is not a viewing area.
- Stage Managers have the responsibility to ensure these procedures are followed, if there is any risk to the crew, performers or public Stage Managers have a duty to arrange for the evacuation of the stage area until such time it is deemed safe for work to continue.

### Overseeing Installation

When the stage and set is being constructed the Stage Manager must ensure that the health & safety procedures outlined above are adhered to, and that construction proceeds according to an agreed stage plan and timetable. The Production Manager may set the overall timetable, but on the day it is the Stage Manager who will ensure work conflicts don't arise and who will issue permits to work for operations such as overhead rigging.

### Flow of Materials

The Stage Manager should put in place a system for ensuring the smooth flow of materials and people on and off the stage. During events like festivals a huge amount of equipment must be moved safely on and offstage. To help this the following points should be addressed

- Establish an On/Off system if possible so all equipment and people enter on one side and exit the other. Access ramps should be clearly marked.
- Ensure an adequate system exists for calling artists from dressing rooms and for cueing them onto stage.
- Work out a backline stage plot for each band well in advance and ensure the equipment required for that set is readily available. Ensure crew members have a printed sheet to help with positioning.
- Ensure there is adequate storage space backstage.
- Make sure that crew who are carrying out manual handling operations such as shifting backline are trained in proper techniques and use the correct PPE such as boots, gloves and (if required) high vis jackets or tabards when working near other vehicles or plant. Appoint someone to act as team leader in the advent of multi-person lifts.
- Maintain good communications with sound, lighting and AV operators.

### Written Records

The Stage Manager does not have the same level of financial responsibility as the Production Manager, nonetheless they still need to keep accurate records of all expenditure they make. They might also need to make note relating to the show itself; stage plans, channel lists, backline setup and so on. It is vital that such notes are kept safely and are written in such a way as to be intelligible.

### Calling Cues

The calling of show cues is more common to theatrical events, however a situation could be envisaged whereby performers must be called from dressing rooms, or the movement of reveals, trussing or rolling risers needs to be co-ordinated. In which case a reliable communications system must be in place, and a clear set of cues and stand-by warnings rehearsed with all relevant parties. In theatrical productions a “Book” of all cues and actions is built up by the Stage Manager. A similar document would be of use if a lot of cueing is required from the SM.

## **ARTIST LIAISON MANAGER**

It is very common on shows or events where several artists or acts are performing to appoint an Artist Liaison Manager who will be responsible for the allocation of suitable properly equipped dressing rooms (including the issue of keys), artist hospitality “riders” (food, drink, towels, security etc.), the issue of passes to artists and guests, artist accommodation (hotels etc), toilets and washing facilities, internal transport and taxi services and back stage parking for artist vehicles. The Artist Liaison Manager should bring the artists Tour Manager or accountant to the Promoter so that settlements and

payments can be made at the agreed times, the Tour Manager should always be brought to the Promoter, never the other way around. Before an artist departs the venue the Artist Liaison Manager should collect all keys and check dressing rooms and facilities for loss or damage, any loss or damages discovered must be reported to the Artists Tour Manager or representative and the Promoter/Production Manager before the Artist departs. The Artist Liaison Manager must be able to deal with a wide variety of questions and requests from artists and their representatives, local knowledge of services and facilities can be vital to ensure smooth running.

In consultation with the Stage Manager and Stewards, the Artist Liaison Manager should help ensure that unauthorised access to the stage and back stage area is restricted, the press, media, agents, managers, guests and general "liggers" must not be given access to the general back stage and production area (including dressing rooms).

The Artist Liaison Manager requires excellent communication skills and a full knowledge of the Contingency Plans and Health Safety and Policy for the event, organisation, company or business for which they are engaged.

### **PRESS OR PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**

In situations where numbers of the Press are present or expected it may also be necessary to appoint a Press and Public Relations Officer, they should have a detailed knowledge of how the press operate, the relevant industry and trade publications and of the press network in general. A band or artist will often appoint a public relations company to help gain the much needed press and publicity required for promotion, be warned, the requirements of a press officer or PR company may often conflict with health and safety issues who is desperate to push a "good story" to promote an artist!

Prior to the event the Press Officer should be able to give vital information to press that can be relayed to the public, this information can assist with vital safety and transport matters.

The Press Officer should be able to give regular accurate statements to the press and deal with requests for photo passes and interviews, if required a Press area or tent should be established where press conferences and statements can be given an act as a general clearing house for press related matters, if necessary, this area should be suitable equipped to service the requirements of the press (such as fax, phone, internet, safe storage and charging facilities) and provide press hospitality. The correct facilities and conditions should exist so that the press can be "managed" by the provision of regular, correct information and stories to enhance the event and act as an aid to safety and communication.

Under no circumstances should the Press Officer authorise access to the stage or front of stage pit area for members of the Press or photographers. Only after agreement by the artists representative (to be arranged via the Artist Liaison Manager) and Steward Supervisor in charge of the pit area may any access the front of stage pit area for

photographers be agreed, this will be limited to the first three numbers of the artists performance. The Supervisor in charge of the pit area holds the final decision to allow access and only if safety permits. Those entering the pit area must use hearing protection.

The Press Officer may have responsibility for charging and collecting "facility fees" to broadcasters, photographers and those recording (by video or other means) the show, event or any aspects of it, this may also include making any necessary royalty payments. This responsibility may be shared or controlled by the event or tour promoter, production manager, book keeper or accountant.

The Press Officer will require excellent communication skills, book keeping skills, a considerable knowledge of all relevant publications, have close contacts within these organisations and publishing houses and a detailed knowledge of the royalty collection services and charges.

Like every one involved with the show or event, the Press Officer requires a full knowledge of the Contingency Plans and Health Safety and Policy for the event, organisation, company or business for which they are engaged.

### **Dealing with Artists**

The Stage Manager, Artist Liaison Manager and Press Officer will have to deal with artists and performers of all types, and should understand their artistic as well as technical needs.

On the other hand artists must be made aware of the physical, technical and time constraints upon their performance. To achieve both these objectives, a fair degree of diplomacy is required from Stage Managers.

Clear instructions need to be given and systems in place for cueing artists or for providing equipment or materials (drinks, towels etc.) whilst the performer is on stage. Entrance and exit points or holding areas should be clearly indicated and emergency procedures - such as announcements from stage and the emergency "Show Stop" procedures - arranged before the show commences. Once the show is over artists must be aware of their responsibilities in clearing instruments or backline from the stage if no one else has been appointed to do this.

## **TOUR MANAGER**

### Overview

The duties of the Tour Manager are primarily concerned with the transport, accommodation and payment of artists, and liaison with promoters & venues. It is the Tour Manager's responsibility to ensure the safe and rapid conduct of people and equipment through a tour itinerary, to assist in the planning of that itinerary and to draw up daily schedules for the booking of transport and accommodation. On international tours the Tour Manager will need to undertake passport, visa and Green Card

arrangements for all people travelling with the tour, and ensure that equipment as well as people arrive on time and intact. Generally, the Tour Manager will also assume responsibility for financial matters once on the road however larger tours will almost certainly have a tour accountant out on the road as the work load will be too large for the tour manager to take on this extra burden. Depending on the size and type of tour it may well be that the Tour Manager takes on a fair amount of the Production Managers' work. Generally speaking, the larger the tour the greater the division of labour and the more specific the Tour Manager's role. There is no hard and fast rule for this, it will vary with every job.

### The Itinerary

Setting a tour itinerary is often undertaken before a Tour Manager has been appointed. If this is the case there is little they can do to influence matters. On any tour it is advisable to minimise daily travel by putting regional gigs together rather than going from one end of the country to the other and back.

- Plan tours to require a minimum of travel.
- Ensure times between dates are realistic, and that the distance between shows can be covered in the time allowed.
- Check venues offer the facilities required by the band

### Technical Riders

Generally the Production Manager will draw up the technical rider in consultation with Lighting Sound and Stage specialists, but on smaller tours the Tour Manager may have to draw up technical specification riders and ensure every venue, agent & promoter understands what they are obliged to provide in order for the event to go ahead.

- A technical rider is a definitive list of all equipment and materials required for the show.
- The rider should make very clear what is required from the agent, venue or promoter and what will be provided by the band or their management.
- The rider should form an integral part of the band's contract with the venue or promoter. It should be made clear what the implications of the rider not being met will be.
- The Tour Manager should have a sufficient understanding of technical jargon to be able to interpret the rider accurately, and understand the implications of a substitute of equipment type, or say the difference between a major or minor loss from the tech spec.
- Technical Riders should regularly be checked and updated as the tour progresses - unused equipment can be shed and new items added. New riders should be sent to all venues, agents & promoters and changes acknowledged.
- In certain instances the precise contents of a rider will only be understood by a subcontractor brought in by the agent or promoter e.g. a PA or lighting company. In this instance it is vital for the Tour Manager to talk direct to the supplier to ensure the rider will be met.

### Venue Suitability

It may be the Tour Managers' responsibility to ensure that venues are suitable for the event. Naturally, this is something that should be addressed when the itinerary is being planned and generally will fall to the Production Manager. Should you have to make a site visit and inspect the venue. Questions to ask are:

- Venue capacity - do the number of seats match the kind of crowd you expect? If there is over capacity can the hall be reduced by means of drapes & sectioning off? If the capacity is too low can extra seating safely be installed?
- Is the seating layout compatible with the production. Do rows need to be removed for a dance floor, does the license allow this?
- Is the stage of adequate size and height. What are the sightlines like?
- Is there adequate storage space backstage for flight cases?
- Check the acoustic of the hall. Will extra PA be required, or acoustic baffles installed?
- Is the power supply adequate? Does it allow for separation of lighting & sound circuits?
- How high is the ceiling? Does it allow adequate room for stage lighting? What weight can be hung from the roof, and where are the flying points positioned?
- Is there adequate provision of Dressing Rooms? Are they near the stage and are they secure?
- Is there an in-house comms system? Who can you talk to?
- What is access to the building like? Will the get-in & out be simple? Will everything fit along the access route?
- What is the parking provision? Is it secure?
- Will you need to hire extra crew for the rig & de-rig?
- Make careful notes of your observations. Maybe take a digital camera.
- Get the phone & fax number of the venue management and technician. Get a map of how to get there.

#### Health & Safety

Overall responsibility for health & safety must reside with the Production Manager, but in the event of smaller tour the division of the two roles may not be clear, indeed they may be collapsed together. So, once on the road the Tour Manager takes responsibility for booking equipment, setting schedules and overseeing work, and as such they are responsible for the Health & Safety of people on the tour. Consequently the Tour Manager must:

- Ensure any transport is safe, practicable, roadworthy and insured.
- Ensure that drivers are both licensed and competent
- Work hours should be calculated - especially for drivers on long hauls - to ensure that statutory regulations are observed, and to allow a rested alert and attentive crew.
- Regular rest and food stops should be calculated into the tour- as should regular days off.
- Gigs should not be taken that require overexertion on the part of artist or crew.
- Venues, Agents & Promoters who fail to meet the technical rider should be made aware they risk cancellation of the show if the safety of crew or performers is in any way compromised.

- During fit-up the Tour Manager should be aware of Health & Safety provision within the venue, and draw to the attention any potentially hazardous situation they or the crew identify. Work should be suspended until the situation is rectified.
- On international tours account should be taken of the need for any vaccinations or medicines that might be required. The Tour Manager should ensure that everyone is aware of the risks and is able to take appropriate measures.
- The Tour Manager should be aware of any particular health problem affecting the artists or crew e.g. asthma or allergy. Provision should be made for special medicines. Medical contact numbers and next of kin numbers should be kept for all travelling production staff.
- The Tour Manager should ensure that the management company have adequate insurance cover for everyone on the tour, and that sub-contractors have their own cover and have the correct paperwork for any hazardous operations they may carry out e.g. Risk Assessments for working at height.
- The Tour Manager should ensure that correct PPE is supplied and used by crew members.

### Transport

Arranging transport is a central part of the Tour Manager's job. This will range from booking a tour coach to holding diesel cash to negotiating excess baggage at airports.

- Booking of transport for every leg of the tour.
- Ensuring that carriers (especially airlines) are aware of the number of people travelling, their names and nationalities and the amount of luggage they should expect.
- Flights and other transport links should always be booked and confirmed.
- Receipts should always be obtained for transport costs, whether it be a £5 taxi journey or the cost of flying the band to New York.
- Always keep at least one step ahead. Book and confirm as far in advance as possible.
- Ensure all artists & crew are aware of travel schedules, make bookings for wake-up calls when necessary to be certain the schedule is kept.
- Make sure tour coaches have adequate seating, luggage space, beds and toilets before booking. Get these requirements in writing. Never overload a vehicle.
- Never underestimate the amount of time a journey will take and the energy it requires. Give crews a rest after a long journey.
- Make sure your driver is competent, licensed and alert. Ensure they undertake daily checks such as oil and water on the vehicle.
- Always carry international breakdown recovery, preferably with an option that will relay you to the next gig if the coach can't be fixed.
- Always carry enough local currency for emergency bribes!
- Be aware of time differences and stopovers.
- Get sorted for visas, green card & carnet well before you travel internationally.
- At large airports make sure of the check-in time and the terminal number. Get there with plenty of time to spare.
- Make sure everyone has their travel documents & passports before you leave for the airport.

### Accommodation

If there's one thing that can destroy morale on a tour it's poor accommodation.

- Prepare a rooming list which will go out with the technical rider and should form part of the contract with agents & promoters - and to travel agents who may prepare rooms on days off. It is a definitive list of all personnel (inc. nationality, passport no., place of birth) and indicates who will get what kind of room, who is sharing with whom and who has any special requirements.
- On arrival the rooming list can be adapted to give individual room numbers, internal phone nos. and so on. Simple info like breakfast times, how to get an external line, call times and so on should be put on the sheet which is then circulated to the tour entourage.
- Always get the best rooms you can afford. There's little point in cutting corners on accommodation.
- Book accommodation early - get venues or promoters to make a recommendation. If they undertake the booking and payment make sure they know what quality of hotel you expect.
- Don't ask people to share rooms unless it's absolutely necessary.
- Book accommodation that is as close as possible to the performance venue.
- Establish with the hotel exactly how many people are coming, their names, arrival time, length of stay and departure time.
- Establish what your method of payment will be, what the tariff is and whether there are any extras like local taxes that have to be taken into account.
- Be sure what is included - breakfast is a particularly important consideration. Make sure that extras such as phone calls & room service are invoiced separately.
- Check the amount of available parking, and make sure the hotel know what kind of vehicle you'll be arriving in.
- Enquire about strong room and cash storage facilities.
- Get a map of how to find the place and get written confirmation of your booking.

### Forward Planning

Many of the worst hassles can be avoided by forward planning. Once the itinerary is set examine it carefully to see how each stage of the tour is to be achieved. Identify where you'll have to stop over, where you need to pick up trains or planes etc. Always look ahead rather than tackling each issue as it arises.

### Legal Issues

Before you start travelling you need to be aware of how different countries may impose restrictions on your travel, or the kinds of materials that can flow freely. Check out:

- Insurance cover for personnel & tour equipment. Ensure all activities and areas are covered. Investigate excesses & extra premiums due.
- Ensuring that legal requirements for crew training etc. are met.
- Import/export regulations for foreign countries
- Carnet restrictions on production materials
- Work permit and visa restrictions
- The amount of time equipment will take to travel and clear customs.

- Maximum working hours should be set - especially for drivers. Non-driving work hours must be included in daily calculations of hours e.g. for tacho records.

### Tour Accounts

Tour accounting involves four distinct operations:

### Money Planning

- Once an itinerary is set plans should be made up to determine the financial requirements of the tour. Who will need payment, when and in what form?
- Arrangements should be made with banks in relevant cities to allow the drawing of what could be considerable sums of cash.
- Account should be made of fluctuating exchange rates and there may be a need to pay different personnel in different currencies.
- Clear means of payment should be worked out well in advance with promoters, agents and venues. Such agreements should be in writing, and should contain definitive descriptions of who will pay whom, how much, when and in what form.
- Plans should be made for the safe collection, storage and transport of money.

### Payments

- Making cash payments for fuel, taxis, food, rentals and so forth that are legitimate elements of production expense.
- Making *per diem* payments to artists and crew.
- Paying for hotels and accommodation.
- Payments to casual crew members.
- Advances of fees and wages to artists and crew.

### Receipts

- Obtaining money as part of agreed fees from agents, promoters, box office and venues.
- Handling money arising from the sale of merchandise.
- Handling money from media appearance fees and so on.

### Records

- Accurate written records should be kept of all financial transactions - preferably in a daily log or computer spreadsheet. If a computer is used back-up discs should be made daily.
- All receipts, invoices and petty cash forms should be kept safe and logged.
- All bank deposits and withdrawals should be noted
- Currency exchange slips should be kept and logged.
- A final reconciliation should be undertaken at the end of the tour and a breakdown submitted to the management company, agent and artist.

Large tours and events often have a specialist Tour or Event Accountant engaged to look after all finances.

## Artists

Dealing with Artists is a major part of Tour Management. It is imperative that the Tour Manager understands the professional (technical requirements) of performers as well as personal needs or idiosyncrasies. That is not to say the Tour Manager has to act as some kind of handmaiden, but a close rapport is necessary. Generally speaking it falls to the Tour Manager to ensure that the following are provided or accounted for:

- All tickets, connections, flights and passes
- Accommodation commensurate with the status of the artist (as previously agreed with Management or Agent rather than based solely on the Artists' perception!)
- Food, drinks and other refreshments whilst in transit.
- Ensuring that food & drink Hospitality Riders are met in full.
- Ensuring any special dietary requirements are catered for.
- Making arrangements for the washing of costumes.
- Ensuring dressing rooms are adequate and furnished to the Artists' requirements.
- Where necessary the Tour Manager may have to act as a buffer between the Artist and the media; setting up meetings, interviews and press calls. This should only be an occasional duty, if it is frequent then a separate Press or Public Relations Officer should be employed.
- Act as a conduit for communication between Artist and Management whilst on tour.
- Where practicable address complaints or requests from Artists.
- Ensure Artists have a full itinerary and travel schedule. Prepare a daily sheet to cover the days activity.
- This may involve booking wake-up calls, taxis and making reservations.
- Ensuring Artists arrive on time at appointments, performances and appearances.

## Core Skills

To undertake the jobs of Tour, Stage, Artist Liaison Manager, Production Manager or Press Officer the following core skills are required:

Literacy

An ability to communicate clearly in writing

Ability to summarise documents

Numeracy

Ability to perform simple calculations

Keeping of financial records

Communication

Ability to express oneself clearly

Ability to understand and interpret written material incl. diagrams & plans

Rudimentary understanding of foreign languages

## Depending on the Role, an Underpinning Knowledge

In addition to the core skills a certain amount of background knowledge is required:

An understanding of good Health & Safety practice

Knowledge of guidelines such as The Event Safety Guide

Knowledge of the Health & Safety At Work Act 1974, and associated legislation

Thorough understanding of musical equipment, backline, PA, lighting and stage specifications.

Knowledge of the stages of the production process.

Understanding of the requirements of performers.

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