



LiveMusicBusiness.com

# 5 Steps to a Roadie Job



A Simple Step-by-Step  
Process To Get Work With  
Touring Bands, On-The-Road

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# Introduction

Getting information about how to get work on-the-road with touring bands used to be difficult.

Not any more.

*by Andy Reynolds*

You want to get a job as a 'roadie' but you have no relevant experience or training. You can't find any *real information* about how to get roadie jobs and you don't see *any adverts* asking for people to work with bands on tour. So, you may be asking yourself, **"How do I actually get started working as a roadie?"**. **"How do I become a concert tour manager or guitar tech or lighting person or FOH engineer or merch seller?"** Well, as with everything, there is a simple system involved in becoming a roadie. It may not be easy, but it is simple. There are 5 steps, and you are going to discover them in this eBook.

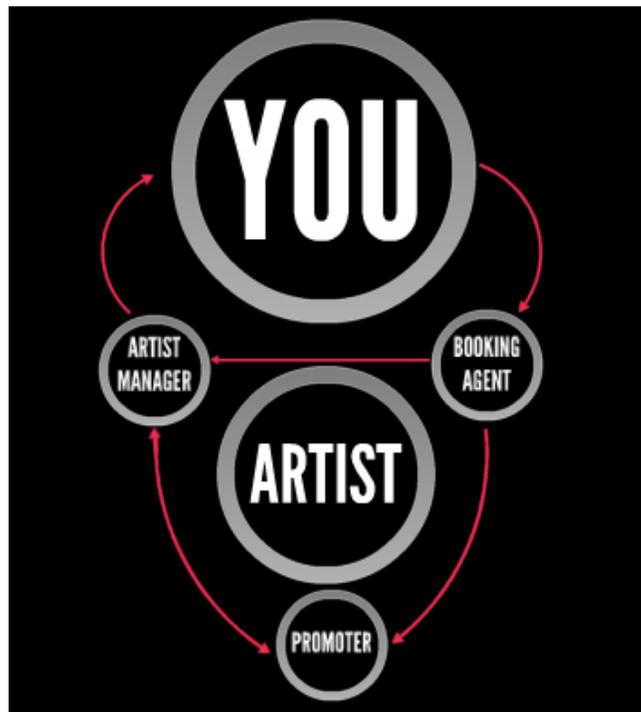


Andy Reynolds

# Step 1: What You Need To Know About The Live Music Business

Your first step is to get to know everything about how the live music business works. This is going to be vital for you as you start to get work, working for bands on tour.

**Please do not skip this step** – this knowledge will help you to seize more opportunities for work. Everything you need to know about concert touring is in my book, ['The Tour Book'](#).



The diagram shows the relationship of the key people involved in the live music business, and how you will fit into this relationship.

## The Artist

Everything revolves around the artist. 'Artist' in this case means the band, singer, DJ, duo, turntablist - any type of contemporary music artist who is going to perform live.

In the early days of an artists career it is the artist themselves who gets the gigs - they find venues and promoters who are willing to book them for a show.

As an artist becomes more successful - and busier - an artist manager will become involved.

## Artist Manager

The artist manager (also known as the personal manager ) is central to the artist's career. The manager's job is to represent the artist in all business areas, and to guide the artist towards the best logistical and financial decisions. This guidance role extends to recordings, publishing, and non-performance promotional activities, but it is the role of the artist manager in shows and touring that is relevant here.

## The Booking Agent

A talent agent is someone who finds paid engagements (film, TV, radio writing) for creative people. A talent agent who finds gigs, shows and tours for a band or singer is known as a booking agent; the process of securing a show or tour is known as a booking - hence the name. The booking agent does not actually put on shows; they simply represent the artist to promoters who may want to put on a show featuring that artist.

The booking agent works closely with the artist manager to plan the touring schedule for the artist and, having agreed a period of touring or concert activity, the agent will approach promoters and offer the artists services.

When the agent has provisionally booked the act into various cities, she will inform the artist manager of the dates on offer and the fees expected. If the manager approves the tour, the agent will issue contracts to the promoters.

## The Promoter

In the UK and Europe, these people are known as promoters; in the US they are known as talent buyers. Whatever the terminology may be, these are the brave souls who decide they can make money out of putting on a show or event.

The promoter's goal is simple: Put bums/asses on seats. This means the promoter takes an event, puts it into a suitable venue, and sells tickets to the public.

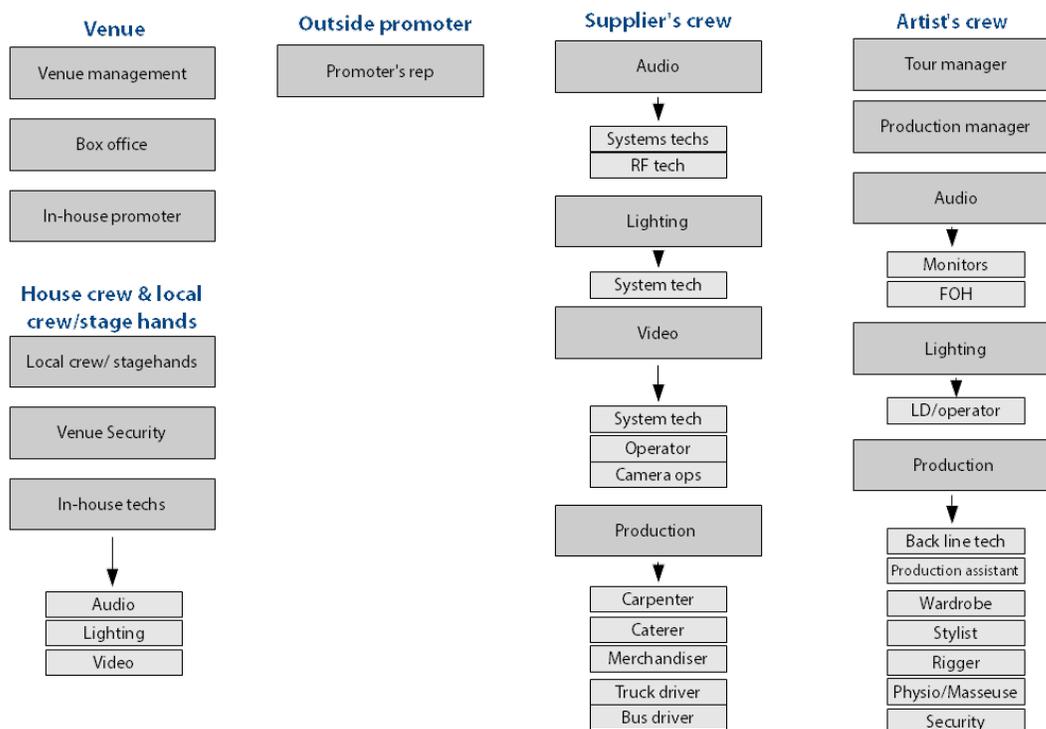
## The Promoter's Representative

The promoter's representative (or rep) is your point of contact if you want to speak to the promoter at a show as the actual promoter will not be around until much later, if at all.

The rep's job is to be a liaison between the venue and the artist (and their crew) and to look out for the interests of the promoter. The rep will arrive at the same time as the main equipment load in and is basically in charge of the show until the end of the night. And please do not assume I am talking about huge shows in theatres or arenas here. Remember, a successful concert promoter may have 10 to 20 shows going on each night and so will have to use their reps to oversee all of those shows on their behalf.

# Step 2: Get To Know The Various Road Crew Jobs

Step 2 is to get to know the various types of road crew jobs. You now know that the live music business is made up of artist managers, booking agents, and promoters. They are involved in organising a modern music performance but it is the road crew who actually go out and set the shows up. And, there are in fact three separate groups of crew involved in putting on a concert – **the house/local crew, the artists touring crew** and the **suppliers touring crew** – the diagram below shows those various road crew jobs.



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Roadie jobs are rarely advertised so you will need to...

# Step 3: Set Up Your Own Freelance Crew Business



The next step is to set up your own **freelance crew business**. Why? Well, you need to treat your career as a business. You have to become self-employed in order to work in the live production industry. There are no full-time roadie jobs. Artists tour for a set duration, employing crew as they need them, and then come off the road to take a break, hopefully to make a new album. While they are off the road the band cannot employ tour crew. But, being a **self-employed freelancer** means you could finish one tour and then go on to work for many different bands, tour after tour, one after another; going where the work is.

You need to treat your career as a business in order to get work on the road with bands and, more importantly, keep working on the road with bands.

But you don't need to rent an office, hire a receptionist and start a multi-national corporation. You *do* need to become self-employed though, and being self-employed means you do not have an employer to look after the your job – you are responsible for making your own money, keeping your own books and accounts, issuing contracts of employment, taking out insurance and paying your own health care bills and, most importantly, paying your own taxes. These are not responsibilities to be undertaken lightly. Failure to organise your finances, taxation and insurance obligations properly can lead to business failure, bankruptcy and even a prison sentence.

However, treating your freelance career as a business will enable you to be

organised, legal and successful. You need to plan your business in order to do this - the lesson in the [5 Steps to a Roadie Job](#) course will help you do this.

# Step 4: Get Your First Work



You have started your **freelance tour crew business**, but may be asking yourself “how do I become a concert tour manager/ roadie crew/ touring road crew person”?

The answer is easy – networking, marketing and training. And, an example of the kind of networking you should do is – find yourself a band!

So, find the best, emerging talent in your town, area, or venue and make yourself indispensable to them.

For instance:

- How many times do you hear bands you know complaining about house sound engineers, weird 'feedback/howl round, bad stage sound, or inattentive bar managers? Could you help them with their sound?
- How many times are musicians and Djs late for shows and sound checks? Could

you organise schedules and reliable transport and act as their tour manager?

- How many times do band members forget or break their instruments, and assume they are able to borrow other band's equipment? Can you repair amps, string guitars or back-up Pro Tools sessions?

Can you see the potential here? With a little forethought (and maybe some technical ability) you can make yourself indispensable to all the 'little' bands and DJs in your town.

In that way, you will get your first **road crew work**.

# Step 5: Do A Good Job And Get More Road Crew Work



After getting your first road crew work, you will need to find more work and make sure you do an even better job than last time. Getting more work will involve marketing yourself to other bands, DJs and managers, as well as to your network of roadies. Doing a good job will involve focusing on your strengths, realising your weaknesses and preparing to work on both.

Your primary focus therefore is to always do the best job that you can. You need to be punctual, reliable, contentious and sober when working, and foster a 'can-do' attitude, both for yourself and for the band and crew you are working alongside. You can apply the strategies outlined in step 4 to further your road crew career, and these will undoubtedly help you to get more work.

Success will come, in small steps at first, and it won't be long until you are booked for months in advance. And, as you grow and expand, taking on ever longer and more lucrative tours, you should always try to keep your eye on the day-to-day operations of your business. You may be away for weeks, or even months at a time, and you don't want problems piling up while you are gone.

# Step 6 (bonus step): Repeat Step 5.

As I said, 5 steps. Fairly easy, and definitely simple. However, you might want more instructions for each of the 5 Steps though, and so I've created a course that describes the steps in more detail.

You can preview the course here: <http://courses.livemusicbusiness.com>



# GET MORE INFORMATION

I have written a course, based on the 5 Steps, which contains more information and complete descriptions of the 5 steps to a roadie job.

Click the button to see a preview of the course.

GET THE PREVIEW