

#SEVEN SUPER SECRET WEAPONS



SURVIVAL TIPS FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

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Introduction

We are inundated with thousands of requests each year for bands to be added to our rosters, to be offered as supports, to be included in band bills, to be added to Festival schedules, to meet with us to give them advice on all the “how to’s” and we are so very blessed to be given many opportunities to partner with bands in their quest for world domination. Wherever we go in the world, regardless of style or location, the questions remain the same.

“What is the secret to survival in the Music Industry?”

“How can our band make it?”

“How can we break in?”

“What do we need to do?”

All I can do is share my own business survival story to answer those questions.

The Pushworth Group started out as Manick Promotions in July 1990 with my business partner, Emmanuel Kyriakidis and myself. Fast forward to 2016 and after 26 years, the same two directors own and operate Queensland’s longest running Music Industry business. The insanity of setting up a Music Industry business is something we both know well and it is interesting, looking back, noting just how obvious it would be, that we would play this part in the Australian Music Industry.

For my business partner, always in trouble in and out of school and bored beyond belief, music kept him distracted and busy. Manny played double bass in orchestras as a kid, (got kicked out of the orchestra when he turned the instrument on its side and played it like a guitar) wrote and arranged for the Jazz bands at school, won Bass Player of the Year in 1984 at the Qld Rock Awards, and performed in several both notorious and forgettable bands in the burgeoning original music scene in Brisbane in the 80s. Once university finished, he toured the Queensland Circuit for several years until he ended up managing and booking it while working for Hutcho – the infamous Queensland agent of the 70s and 80s. In contrast, I starting playing piano at the age of three, was the nerdy kid that accompanied eisteddfods and school assemblies, wrote the songs for weddings, funerals and ordinations at the local church, arranged the music for the school bands and the choirs and was accepted into the Conservatorium of Music at the age of 16. Two albums, several bands and thousands of gigs later, a finalist at the Qld Rock Awards, I morphed into the typical rock chick doing the Covers Circuit while supporting my original habit.

While gigging and touring, Manny would be replacing last minute blowouts and negotiating deals while I would be on stage assessing the crowd for security risks and planning photo shoots in my head while waking up in the middle of a song wondering what the hell I was singing. Clearly, the business side of the music industry was more important for both of us.

Between the two of us, we have done every sh*t gig in Queensland and thrown ourselves down the rapid waterslide that gouges through every industry ...particularly this one. With each new project, we would focus on finishing it thinking, “THIS would be IT!” Yet as we all know business is cyclical and accumulative, so each project was merely ANOTHER step to take in the process. There was always another step to take.

Challenges and opportunities targeted us with equal ferocity. Every Christmas, we would say to each other, that this would be our last year. Yet now, in retrospect, after surviving and thriving 26 years in the Music Industry, we feel just as excited about this industry as we did when we insanely opened the doors in 1990.

What the hell were we thinking?

What the hell are YOU thinking?

We are still recovering from a vicious Global Financial Crisis. The Retail Industry is struggling as more people save their money and are more selective on what they do spend and why. Unemployment is rising, housing prices are climbing pushing more people into the rental scene, and our dollar is falling while doom and gloom headlines our news on a daily basis. Hotels in Australia simply can no longer afford to fund the high cost of hiring a band. Live music is a major risk factor. Add the cost of security, lockout laws, advertising, production, lighting, staging and cost of band plus the extras - staff, electricity, air conditioning, cleaning – and unless hundreds of thirsty cashed up punters come to each and every gig, the cost is too great. In comparison, a Night Life system provides a higher controlled cost with less risk.



The competition for the public entertainment dollar is greater than ever. Consider what you do yourself? People can easily download

movies and music at home. Technology gives us more variety of choices when compared to the high cost of pub drinks, Uber home plus the constant personal safety issues that keep punters away from going out for entertainment. So shall we give up now or perhaps develop a strategy to leverage these challenges?

Well, the first challenge is to find a place to perform where the cost is shared. The next challenge is once you find a place to play, is to attract an audience that is willing to buy tickets, check into your event on social media and add to the bar take that night – all of which help to cover the cost of your performance.

We are inundated with requests from Artists to book their bands. Most have really great songs, years of experience, play and sing well and have a nice website and social media engagement. However, gigs in 2016 are a hell of lot different to gigs in 1986, 1996, or 2006. Times have changed. The old model is dead. Without venues providing a place for you to play, the music industry will not survive. Therefore, bands in 2016 need a solid Business plan, to build value in the market place. The Pushworth Group runs several programs to facilitate an expanded and developed Artist Business Plan. **When You Mean Business** sets you up to maximize your Cover Gig plan. **The Manick Project** is an independent release platform. **The Gigahertz Program** gives you the start you need to go LIVE.

Are you ready for any of these programs? The bar has been significantly raised to meet the revised demands of the market. To qualify for a spot at a Gigahertz show, your band needs to be able to bring between 40-75 heads to each show.



So many bands say to us “How the hell am I going to do that?” Start here and factor in these **Seven Secret Weapons** relentlessly. Make it your business. Because it is.

1. **Creation and Expression**
2. **Business**
3. **Money**
4. **Story**
5. **Resources**
6. **Relationships**
7. **Influence**

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Creation and Expression

There is **MUSIC** and there is BUSINESS.

The MUSIC is the product that you create and express and offer for sale.

Believe it or not, we receive demos from many bands year after year who simply cannot play their instruments or sing in tune. They may be able to market themselves and bring heads to a local gig however they simply cannot cut in on stage or in the studio therefore the longevity in this industry is rather short.



1. Know how to play your instrument well
2. Hire a teacher – continue to challenge yourself musically
3. Develop a musical style
4. Develop a vocal style
5. Get a vocal coach and constantly upgrade your skills in regular singing lessons
6. Learn how to read music
7. Be able to sing live in a studio at a moment's notice – and in tune.
8. Be able to perform unplugged.
9. Write Songs that people will select for the Soundtrack of their lives
10. Write and record consistently and plan to release product every few months. Recording one single or album is not enough. Thanks to instant on line access, you are competing with the rest of the world. The human animal gets bored very easily and demands to be fed something new on a regular basis. So give it to them.
11. Practice on your own
12. Rehearse regularly
13. Hone, refine, redefine – your music is a constantly evolving organism. Keep it fed and watered so it can grow.
14. Know the business but focus on the music
15. Delegate the business but have a checking mechanism in place
16. Build a team of people who are NOT on a learning curve so you can focus on your Music.
17. Write Songs that people will select for the Soundtrack of their lives



When You Mean Business

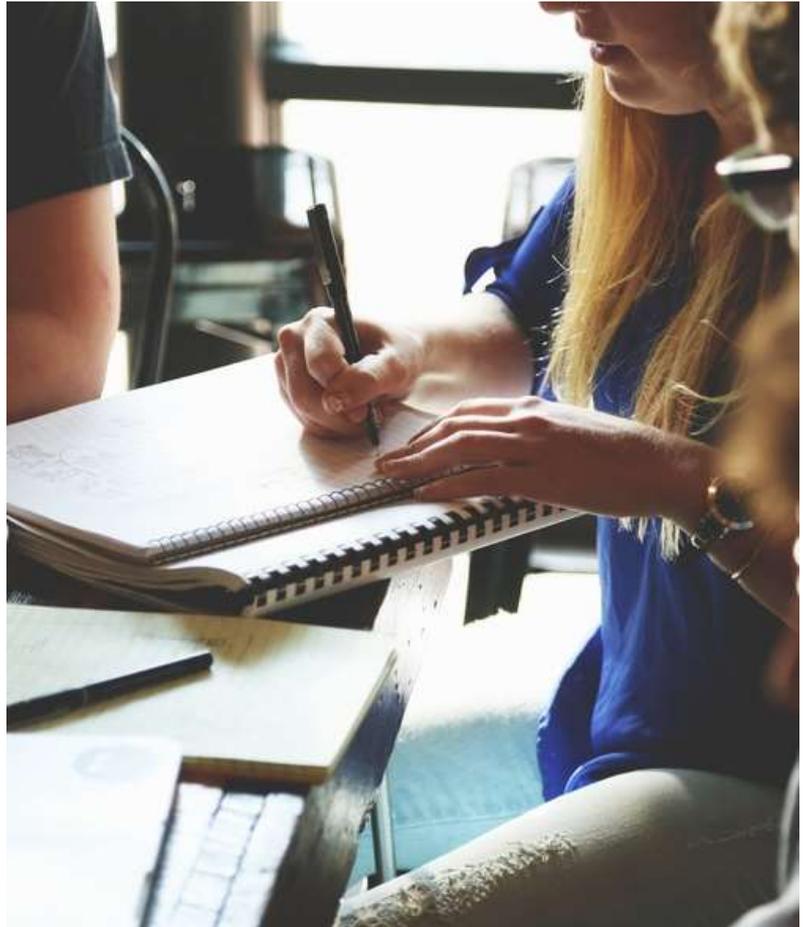
There is MUSIC and there is BUSINESS.

The **BUSINESS** is all about finding someone to purchase and listen to your MUSIC.

Without an audience, you keep the wallpaper in your bedroom company.

MUSIC is your PRODUCT and like every other business in the world, you have to understand how to manage, organise, administer, distribute, market, sell, generate and regenerate.

Unless you can self-organize and self-manage, you will not survive. Construct a strong business structure in place and create a workable synergy between yourself, the band and your team. Work together as a joint venture. Nominate all the band members for different jobs to keep the business going. You share instruments on stage – you share jobs off stage



1. Decide who owns the brand and what that includes
2. Build your Team – (Agent, Management, Publicist, Merchandise, Lawyer, Book Keeping, Licensing, On Line Management)
3. Copyright all Music and Lyrics
4. Trademark your Name & Logo
5. Purchase the Domain Name for your Brand Name for Website and Social Networks
6. Engage a Web Master as your website is your public face.
7. Form a company for your label, song writing/publishing, touring, merchandising, etc.
8. Register with a song writing Performing Rights Organization
9. Select your Distribution networks
10. Build your Networks – join Associations and Organisations as well as Communities and Causes
11. Cover Yourself with Health & Equipment Insurance
12. Craft agreements with all involved – Band Members, anyone helping out, Agent, Manager (down the track), Publicist and Label.
13. Plan and actually have regular Meetings to stay on top of the business.

Take ownership of your business or you will attract someone unscrupulous who knows they can easily take you for a ride. Google has hundreds of high profile examples of this. Know what is going on in your own business. Make it YOUR business. If you do not know what to do, pay for advice. Find people in the industry who have experienced it and hire them for Business and Performance Coaching. Find a mentor. Start with your Business Plan and run the Band like it is a business ...because it is.

Show Me The Money

Very few original gigs pay you a guarantee until you have proven bums on seats and even then you typically get offered a versus deal.



- Ensure you have your own income source while you build your brand.
- Follow sound financial principles – Save 10%, establish a 10% Cushion, then Invest 10% and only then Risk 10%. Keep yourself financially covered at all times.
- Create a Band Kitty agreement to cover all costs
- Play in a Covers Band to support your Original Project.
- Typically, Income in the Music Industry now is coming more from Live Work and not so much From CD Sales. Your major focus must be on Live Performance Bums on Seats because people can download music. However, no one can download the live experience that you given them. So capitalise on LIVE!
- The best time to sell a CD is at a live gig. Have a good solid inventory of CDs available for sale at your gigs and have an accountable process in place to manage the sales.
- Downloads are important as promotional activity. Aria and AIR charts are critical publicity tools for bands.

Know how to effectively utilise them.

- Have a clear Income Plan in your band for the Brand where the combination is of selling CDS and Merchandise, Sponsorship, and performing live in this Local Market.
- Build your markets systematically. Start in your town then Regional then interstate then International. To survive just on selling CDs and downloads you need to expand into a Global market. Choose your Professional team wisely. Choose a team that will build your career in the Localised market, establishing a solid foundation in Australia, before you attempt to conquer a Global market.

Put together a financial plan – not just for the band but also for yourself. Factor this into your Business Plan. Save for recording, maintenance and replacement of your instruments, perhaps work in a covers band to support your original habit, have a financial cushion for when things go wrong – the van breaks down etc. Put this in your band agreement. You need money to produce your product. Think bigger! Have a plan in place for every step of your career.

After you release your product and can bring 100 – 150 heads to a gig, it is time for them to work with a company like Pushworth to take it to the next level. You then need time to focus on your music again to create the next product and continue to upgrade your live performance skills.

We work with you to build your brand in our Networks, by leveraging your achievements so far and begin to book you in Gigahertz, Band Bills, Tour Supports, and Festivals and then your own shows. It is a strategic process with step by step carefully plotted and planned to ensure your career is built on a solid framework of credibility and reputation.

This is when you put your professional team together – Agent, Publicist, Label. Once you are at a certain level, we put a plan in place, if we take you on, you may have an opportunity for us to facilitate a Sponsorship application to obtain investment dollars to record your next product or clip and we commence joint ventures to not only build your career but build your bank account.



Who Are You?

As this expression of your story, make a Brand Plan.

1. Create a Logo - Based on your Brand Discovery Session as part of your Publicity Campaign, create a logo to match the experience and feeling. Display on everything.
2. Construct your Live and On Line Look. The Look – if I rock up to your gig and you are on a break, can I spot you in the crowd? Do you stand out or do you look like one of the punters? What is your style? Do you set fashion trends? How do I feel on your Website? What sets you apart from other bands on line? My Space is dead. Everyone has a Facebook. However, your website is the opportunity for you to show just how unique you really are.
3. Know Your Target Market and Be Clear on the Value of Your Brand
4. EPK – this is your opportunity to grab Media attention. What do they want? What are they over seeing? What will get them excited to interview you? What is worthy of publication?
5. Include a good mix of high-quality promo shots and exciting live shots that no one would expect.
6. Make sure that the MP3 on your website highlights of only your finest and most catchy songs. If the guitar is out of tune, please do not upload it.
7. Publish links to all the good things press or other bloggers have said about you
8. Maintain an up to date Calendar – Past and Future - Show where you've been and where you're going
9. Testimonials – make them count – short, to the point, linked to the person who gave it.
10. Press Release – One paragraph about the band, one paragraph about what you are selling – CD Launch, Special Gig, Upcoming Event. Make it interesting and attractive to your target market
11. The Photo Shoot - Your imaging is THE Most important aspect of your brand. Your photographs must depict your essence. High Resolution, planned, great backgrounds, themed, stylised images will make for a great website and give you a better chance at attracting media attention. Professional photos folks please! I cannot tell you how many bands are smoking hot but their photos look like granny took them in the kitchen. So in your Photo Shoot, consider your location, background, foreground like professional photographer.
12. Stand Out From The Crowd - Do something a little different to other bands.
13. Discover your USP – what is your Unique Selling Point? Why you?
14. Refine your POD – what is your Point of Difference in this particular Target Market?
15. Get Innovative and Be Provocative
16. Start Trends. Practice for Interviews. Be prepared. Collect a strong catalogue of stories of interest that will relate to the Media location and THEIR audience.

What is your story?



The story is everything, after all, and this is how you write songs to start with. This is why you started a band in the first place. Your Brand is a public expression of the Story. Make sure you know your own Personal Story. Be clear about why you are doing what you are doing. Know the personal Story of your Brand. Why? These stories give you something to talk about.

1. Songs
2. Photos
3. Clips
4. Press Releases
5. Blogs
6. The story helps write the press release and articles and interview questions for the Media

Find your story. Find your Cause. How many high profile artists experienced challenge and tragedy in their life, joined an organisation that supported them through the pain who then went on to collaborate with that organisation in fund raising events, garnering much more media attention and sponsorship dollars and therefore raised all profiles exponentially.



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Resource

Appreciate what you have and you get more to appreciate. You need Resources and Fuel to be in a band. It takes a great deal of preparation, planning, repairs and maintenance not to mention initial investment and of course the continual replacement and upgrades.

Make a list of everything that you need to gig, put a repair and maintenance plan into place, and value what you have as these resources enable your band to gig in the first place.

1. **Instruments** – Your Own and as a Collective oversee the whole Band.
2. **Gear** – PA, Lights – make sure if you are hiring that you work with a Production Hire Company that values its inventory.
3. **Car** – I cannot tell you how many gigs have been lost because cars break down. Maintain them – this is how you get to your gigs. Create a backup Transport Plan!!!
4. **Gig Kit** – strings, gaff, cables, batteries, mics, picks, sticks, extension leads, power boards, stationary, tape, staples, pens and of course a first aid kit. – check it before the week begins and replenish it monthly.
5. **Health and Fitness** – get Gig Fit – tours are exhausting – cancelling gigs on a regular basis because you have caught another cold is not great for building relationships in the Industry.
6. **Website** – On Line Look – upgrade it constantly. Your band may have begun 4 years ago but you need to look like you belong to 2016!
7. **Live and Local** – Stage Clothes – wash them, iron them, look after them, pay someone to hem your jeans or learn how to do it yourself. You seriously do not want to know the media interviews that have gone pear shaped because the drummer's shoes stank out the studio! Ew!
8. **Promo Kit** – CD, Merch, Tickets, and Autographed Promo Shots – Conduct a weekly stock take and update and replenish monthly.
9. **Comfort Kit** when Touring – everything you physically need - Pillows, Sleeping Bags, Towels, Shampoo, Conditioner, Soap, Mugs, Your Favourite Coffee, Tea or Hot Chocolate, Spare Keys, Mobile Phone Charger, Phone Credit, Sunglasses and a backup Credit Card.

What resource could you better leverage and utilise to add value to your brand?

1. You are only limited by your imagination.
2. Partner with a not for profit organisation that could really benefit from accessing your fan database.
3. Collaborate with a local business who could really benefit from accessing your fan database.
4. Reach more people through their networks, create awareness of some special cause and consider donating % of proceeds – either ticket, CD or merchandise sales.
5. Create innovative competitions and grab media and blogger attention
6. Get innovative with the Merchandise that promotes your brand. What else could people use other than T Shirts?
7. Play with some new concepts and see where it takes you!

Relationships

Even if you are a solo artist, relationships are vital aspects of your life as a professional musician. This industry is a comprehensive matrix of connections without which nothing works. It is important for you to understand how it works together in synergy as well as how to value each and every relationship for today's young guy collecting glasses in the public bar may be tomorrow's promoter of that festival you want a spot in.



1. You
2. Band Members
3. Agent
4. Publicist
5. Label
6. Tour Manager
7. Production Manager
8. Crew
9. Merchandise Staff
10. Door Staff
11. Ticketing Company
12. Sponsors
13. Support Bands
14. Producer
15. Promoters
16. Media and Bloggers
17. Fans

It is not just the relationships in the industry that count, it is how you connect and engage with your fans. How do you connect with rival bands working a similar market to you? How professional are you with young emerging media? And the big one – how do you manage the girlfriends and boyfriends of the band members? How do you keep it all together when the shit hits the fan? How many bands have broken up because of a breakdown of a relationship? If you have a girlfriend, parent or mate managing your band or helping out with bookings have an agreement in place and as part of your business plan, have a succession plan sorted so you don't lose information or gigs when someone wants to bail. What do you do when the girlfriend of the drummer is looking after your Social Media and is missing the mark? Who is going to tell her without pissing him off? Consider all these relationships, set up agreements with clear parameters, include in your business plan, establish your process, create a succession plan and learn how to manage. Here are some agreements to consider:

1. Band Agreement – Music Rights, Licensing, Representation, Management etc
2. Business Plan and Agreement
3. Financial Plan Agreement
4. Marketing Plan - Image and Brand Agreement
5. Social Media Management Plan
6. Communications Plan and Agreement
7. Operation Plan
8. Succession Plan
9. Strategic Plan

Influence

How do you measure the worth of your influence in this industry?

How do you measure the worth of your influence in this genre?

How do you measure the worth of your influence in this city?

How do you measure the worth of your influence in this region?

How do you measure the worth of your influence in this country?

Take steps to really get to know the value of your Brand/Band. Ask these questions.

- What is your USP – unique selling point?
- What is your POD – point of difference?
- Why would someone go to your gig?
- How many bums on seats are you worth?
- What is the gross bar sale figure that your performance brings to any venue?
- Know your **Target Market** and what they want and how you can give it to them
- What is the BUFA for your Brand? (Benefit, Utility, Feature, Advantage)
- Build your presence in the Music Industry
- Find your Niche.
- Find your Cause and join forces with a Charity

The more people you can reach and then convert into fans, the more value will be added to your business. The more value you offer the more people, the more value will be added to your business.

1. Allocate a generous slice of Tickets, CDs and Merchandise for Giveaways.
2. Get to know the locals around all your gigs and tours. Make friends, offer to do a free song or have a live chat in air to giveaway branded CDS, Tickets and Merch
3. Visit Local Music Stores
4. Visit Local TV, Print, Radio stations
5. Know the Local Fan Hang Outs and make an Appearance
6. Contact Local Schools and ask to visit and talk to the kids.

You can Google everything other than credibility, experience, market knowledge and real time results and a proven history of achievements.





Build your Communities, build your Fan Base, and start to build your Influence resume.

1. Flyers, Web Presence, Networking, Great Demo, Video, EPK
2. Upload your music and videos to your website, You Tube and as many Social Media and Music sites possible.
3. Set up at least 10 social media profiles – link and post daily – set up a campaign plan.
4. Circulate Flyers and Posters - Music Stores, Uni campus, Hotels, Cafes, Local Businesses, Studios, - anywhere music lovers like to hang out – Add your website

details and entice as many people as possible to LIKE And FRIEND you.

5. Network yourself – Get out there - Go to live shows for other bands. Get to know what to do where to go and see how everyone else is doing it.
6. **Blog.** Have something to say and say it often. Link your blog to your website and your social media and submit to Blog Directories to get as much traffic as possible.
7. **Connect to your** audience. Hang out with the fans. Become a part of the culture, which supports you. By doing that you can better understand what attracts your fans to you in the first place.
8. **Build Relationships and Create Partnerships and Leverage.**
9. Create your own Band Nights
10. Support a Local Cause
11. Share the Cost of Publicity
12. Build a Culture Together
13. Become Symbiotic Sales Teams – recommend instruments from a Music Store in exchange for their recommendation to customers to buy your tickets and CDs.

Leverage What Sucks

Like we said in the Introduction, we have done every shit gig and experienced some major challenges in the 26 years of running this company. We survived by learning how to identify an opportunity when something goes pear shaped. And in this industry, you are guaranteed an opportunity like this on a regular basis. ☺ Every challenge – everything you think sucks – is an opportunity for you to capitalise on.

- Make a list of everything that you think sucks in this industry
- Make a list of all the challenges that you have encountered
- List all the possible solutions that you can think of for all these challenges
- Look around you, in local businesses, in politics, in other bands, in your industry and list the challenges that other people face right now at this point in history.
- Scan the news daily in your local area – discover the challenges – be innovative and create ways to combine your show with something else, bring your fans, get access to their database, create media interest and create events – that bottom line get more people along.
- Find ways for that challenge be an opportunity for you and take action.

What Now?

1. The Global Music Industry Market now has unlimited choice about what to buy and where to buy from. It is no longer limited to a music store holding a supply of your CD. It is crazy how easy it is to set up a website, Social Media and build your audience. We do everything on line now so if you are not on line you will not even be considered as a credible Music Industry player. If you can't do it yourself, pay someone to do it!
2. Put your professional team together – Agent, Publicist, Label. Talk to Manny about working with The Pushworth Group to build your career. Sign up for all our Newsletters and stay tuned to opportunities for your brand.
3. Come along to one of our Publicity workshops. We show you how to combine Mobile, On Line and Local and Live – that is the key. Music Downloads will never stop. Consider someone downloading your music as a Promotional opportunity for you to leverage into your live shows. Get innovative and go with the flow. If they are downloading, give them something to download but get them to sign up to your mailing list so you can add them to your fan base.
4. Apply to perform a set of your latest songs at the next Gigahertz concert.
5. Be Gig Ready for Support Opportunities. Email your EPK to manny.admin@pushworth.com and stay connected. Don't call, keep in touch via email. If we have a support for you, we will be hunting you down so don't worry.
6. Put together a Covers Band to earn money to support your originals project. Michael Geeves looks after local Brisbane pubs and clubs. Mark Colvin looks after Functions and Weddings. Brad Buckley manages our Regional Gigs. Build your chops and fans at the same time!
7. Educate yourself. Get a business coach. Get a performance coach. Go to as many Music Industry events as possible.
8. Network – choose your field of interest and go out and be a part of that scene in every possible way. Come along to as many of our live shows as possible. We regularly give away tickets to Festivals and Concerts. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
9. Challenge yourself and take yourself out of your chosen field and expand your horizons and be innovative.
10. There are few opportunities for employment in this industry so you have to create your own. To work with an established credible music industry business will be the best way for you to start. To get their attention, work as an intern or volunteer. Start at the bottom and do all the jobs that no one else wants to do. Have a strong work ethic and be prepared to be flexible and dynamic and do whatever it takes. We had one intern who refused to move cardboard boxes in the storage room as she felt it was beneath her. We all do whatever and whenever it is needed. Suffice to say she was unemployed for quite a while.
11. Build your influence gradually. Credibility, experience and result history cannot be googled – they are earned over years.

Have a healthy balance of all seven areas in your Brand and begun to focus on attracting audiences to each show. There is no magic bullet however there IS a process for you to follow with consistent attention and effect. Do not give up when it all gets too hard. Push on through the frustration and focus on the end result that you and your band have set together and not only survive the Music Industry but flourish and enjoy it.



About Us

Established in 1990 by [Manny Kyriakidis](#) and [Nichola Burton](#), [The Pushworth Group](#) is an Australian full-service agency encompassing bookings, tours, event management, web design, marketing and publicity, artist roster has been home to Grammy, ARIA and APRA award winners for more than two decades. As one of the most respected and longest run agencies in the country, Pushworth has played a fundamental role in Australian events and the careers of entertainers for over 26 years.

Our passion is to build Business with you.

This is the bottom line when working with Venues, Pubs, Clubs, Festivals or Performing Artists Businesses. Whether a suburban pub or an inner city nightclub, a regional hotel or a music festival, a corporate function or a private party. Whether emerging or established, whether big or small, whether it is to earn money playing someone else's music OR to perform your own music – it does not matter. We love to work with people of all types to build and develop their business for the long term -whether it is a place where music can be heard and seen OR the music itself.

There are many sides to business in this industry as in every industry. It takes a massive vision, a good solid plan, a competent hard working team and a whole swag of strategies to hold firm to the Vision YOU have for your Venue Culture, Event or your Music. Ranging from international tours to working with pubs and clubs to utilize entertainment more effectively in their marketing campaigns, corporate to community events, web design and publicity campaigns; Pushworth's boutique stable of services are among the country's most in-demand. Our Team covers four different generations with each team member in their own right bringing a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to the Pushworth table for the benefit of our clients. We offer a continuity of market knowledge and experience unmatched by any other entertainment service company in Queensland.

Stay Tuned In

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