

# **BAND COACH TIP SHEET**

## **GENERAL TIPS**

- Since there will be 2 band coaches per band, make sure you and your co-coach are on the same page. One of you may take the "task-master" role, while the other is more of the "cheerleader." One of you may provide more musical direction while the other helps more with lyrics. Get to know your co-coach & their strengths/weakness so you can work together effectively.
- Do not be afraid to give your band A LOT of direction. Certainly, you don't want to squash their creativity, but most of these campers have NEVER done this kind of thing before & if you give them too much "freedom," that lack of direction can lead to frustrations & panic at the end of the week when they HAVE to have a song! Try to let them be creative within the guidelines you set. For example:
  - You may suggest that they write their song with verse/chorus verse/chorus bridge/chorus structure, but let them write all the lyrics.
  - You may suggest that they write a song using the E & A chords, but then allow them to play with the tempo and how many counts each chord gets.
- Please note that nothing on this tip sheet is a requirement. You may find yourself doing things in a different order to suit the needs of you band. That's fantastic! Do what you have to do when you need to do it!
- Don't be afraid to take a break if your campers are starting to space out or get frustrated. Taking a walk, getting a snack, doing cartwheels- whatever - might be just what they need to get back on track

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## **DAY ONE IDEAS**

- Start with a "meet & greet"
  - General intro's - name, where you're from etc
  - Musical experience? (instruments played, band experiences, music they like, fav. bands etc)
  - This is a good time to get the feel for the skill levels of your players
- Explain the K.I.S.S. principal (keep it simple songwriters) for the week.
  - A song with two to three chords is ABSOLUTELY FINE
  - Idea is to be creative, have fun, collaborate
  - Don't over-analyze what you're doing - work hard & do your best, but energy is much more important than perfection in rock n' roll.
- Discuss the musical roles of each band member in the band
  - Drummer- tempo/transition master
  - Bass & drummer = the rhythm section - responsible for the groove of the song
  - guitar & keys = drive the chord progressions & can also add melody "hooks", solos etc
  - Singer - the centerpiece, the bandleader
- Consider starting the songwriting process with a jam.
  - Have the keyboard/guitar/bassist pick a basic chord progression (i.e. what chords/notes to play, how many beats they'll hold each chord etc),
  - have the drummer pick a beat/tempo
  - Teach singer to "babble sing"
  - Jam!!!
  - Note: you may need to tailor this to the player with the least level of experience in your group so you don't frustrate someone right off the bat.
- Now, experiment with different grooves/tempo/chords & see if you can't get a basic song going. Discuss what topics you could sing about given the mood of the song (or, alternatively, think about the mood of the song you want to write & figure out what kind of music can go with it)
- Assign the singer the task of creating a lyric/chord sheet - this makes the most sense since she likely won't have an instrument in her hands. Have her brainstorm lyric ideas with the band. In most bands, the lyrics will be largely driven by the singer, but this doesn't have to be the case.
- Talk about BAND NAMES!!
- Take a lot of notes so they can remember what they did from Day One to Day Two!

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## **DAY TWO IDEAS**

- If you haven't already, spend a lot of time today getting a basic song structure down (e.g. will it be verse/chorus verse/chorus bridge/chorus? will it be verse, prechorus, chorus? etc). This doesn't have to be set in stone, but the sooner they work this out, the easier it will be for them to practice & start filling in "the blanks" for lyrics etc.
- Rehearse the song in sections. Make sure that the keyboardist/guitarist/bassist are all on the same page in terms of when they are changing chords, what chords they are playing etc.
- Help them find some "transition techniques" - a lot of times, bands struggle to figure out how they are going to go from intro to verse, verse to chorus, from chorus back to verse, from verse to bridge etc. Give them ideas/suggestions such as:
  - Drum "fills" (could be as simple as overhead drum -stick clicks).
  - Lead singer (or someone else) yells out the count-off or does a "fingers-in-the-air" count-off between sections (it's pretty rock n' roll to yell "One, Two, Three, Four!!")
  - Sustained whole notes under the count off.
  - Lead singer can yell out something fun like "alright, here we go now!"

## **DAY THREE IDEAS**

- Continue some serious focus on transitions & PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!
- Depending on how your band is progressing, you may still be on Day One or Day Two ideas. That's perfectly fine, but if you've got a group that's doing well, consider "Adding "Flare."
- "Flare" ideas to make a song more interesting:
  - Dynamic changes (sudden ones can be cool).
  - Tempo change ups.
  - Vocalist can try melody range changes.
  - Guitar/bassist can try different strumming patterns in different sections.
  - Add back up vocals.
  - Try a "call & response" between singer & band or singer/band & audience.
  - Dramatic pauses, dramatic endings, dramatic beginnings etc.
  - Think about "voicings" of the notes/chords the campers are playing - would it sound cool if the keyboard player switched to the high octave on the chorus?? Could the bass player play further up the neck?
  - Add solo sections for each instrument.
  - Add coordinated dance moves!
  - Anything goes!! Be creative!!

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## **DAY FOUR IDEAS (for GRC, for LRC, you can look at this on day 3)**

- PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!!!
- Continued focus on transitions.
- Make sure everyone is clear on how the song ENDS! This sometimes gets forgotten the midst of practicing the parts of the song.
- Work on Cheat Sheets as needed. Make sure they understand a cheat sheet is NOT the lyric chord sheet - they should just write basic notes to themselves for cues so they don't have their faces buried in a piece of paper at the show.

## **DAY FIVE IDEAS (for GRC, for LRC, you can look at this on day 3)**

- This will be more PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE, but we'll also do a lot of work on "preparing for the big-stage" too.
- Discuss the band "look/attire/attitude" so they have some consistency. This is minor, but it's part of rock n' roll - bands with a cohesive look come off as more professional.
- Make sure if they need cheat sheets that they can see read them - think about where they'll put them.
- Hopefully they have a band name by now! They may want to create a kick drum sign for their band.
- Consider "mental practice" of the song - meaning, have the campers do the tune without instruments, visualizing themselves doing the tune. This is something they can use right before they go on stage for the showcase to mentally prepare