

SEVEN SUPER SECRET WEAPONS

For Survival
In 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 story to answer those questions.

The Pushworth Group started out as Manick Promotions in July 1990 with myself and my business partner, Nichola Burton. Fast forward to 2011 and after 21 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 me, always in trouble in and out of school and bored beyond belief, music kept me distracted and busy. I played double bass in orchestras as a kid, (got kicked out of the orchestra when I 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, I toured the Queensland Circuit for several years until I ended up managing and booking it while working for Hutcho – the infamous Queensland agent of the 70s and 80s. In retrospect, my business partner, Nicki 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. A finalist at the Qld Rock Awards in 1989, she was the typical rock chick doing the Covers Circuit while supporting her original habit.

While gigging and touring, I’d be replacing last minute blowouts and negotiating deals while she would be on stage assessing the crowd for security risks and planning photo shoots in her head while waking up in the middle of a song wondering what the hell she 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 shit gig in Queensland and thrown ourselves down the rapid waterslide of exceptional bullshit that goes with every industryparticularly this one. Every Christmas, we would say to each other, that this would be our last year and now, in retrospect, after surviving 21 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 were we thinking?

.....The same that you are thinking right now in your band.....

What the hell are you thinking?



We are in the middle of 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 falling, and doom and gloom headline the MSN and Google news channels 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, OLGR compliance, 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 DJ 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, taxi home plus the constant personal safety issues that keep punters away from going out for entertainment.

So give up now or 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, how do you attract an audience that is willing to pay to see you, buy merchandise or buy drinks at the venue – all of which help to cover the cost of your performance.

The Pushworth Group runs a Gigahertz Program. To qualify for a spot at a Gigahertz show, your band needs to be able to bring between 100 – 150 heads to each show.

So many bands say to us “How the hell am I going to do that?”

Factor in these Seven Secret Weapons relentlessly. Make it your business.

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

Have a healthy balance of all seven areas in your Brand and you can easily attract audiences to each show. Don't 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.

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.

1. Know how to play your instrument well
2. Get 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. Practice on your own
11. Rehearse regularly
12. Hone, refine, redefine – your music is a constantly evolving organism. Keep it fed and watered so it can grow.
13. Know the business but focus on the music
14. Delegate the business but have a checking mechanism in place
15. Build a team of people who are NOT on a learning curve so you can focus on your Music.

Meaning 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
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's going on in your own business. Make it YOUR business. If you don't 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 businessbecause 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.

1. Ensure you have your own income source while you build your brand.
2. 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.
3. Create a Band Kitty agreement to cover all costs
4. Play in a Covers Band to support your Original Project.
5. 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. But no one can download the live experience that you given them.
6. 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.
7. CD sales are important as promotional activity. Aria and AIR charts are critical publicity tools for bands. Know how to effectively utilise them.
8. 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.
9. Build your markets step by step. Start off in Brisbane then Regional then Interstate. To survive just on selling CDs 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 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 and Supports 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. Craft 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 don't 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. Really great 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
16. Be Provocative
17. Start Trends
18. Practice what each band member needs to say in a Media Interview. Be prepared. Collect a strong catalogue of stories of interest that will relate to the Media location and THEIR audience.



What is your story? What is your brand? 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

How many high profile artists experienced tragedy in their life, joined an organisation that supported them through the pain who then went on to partner the organisation in a fund raising event, garnering much more media attention and sponsorship dollars and therefore raised all profiles exponentially.

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, value what you have as these resources enable your band to gig in the first place. Although you could stand up on stage, naked, no instruments and hum your parts. Mmmmm.....interesting..... ☺

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. Have a back up 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 isn't 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 are in 2011!
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 don't 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 Autographs on Photos etc – check stock weekly 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, Sunglasses and a backup Credit Card.

What resource can you GIVE 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. Partner with a local business that could really benefit from accessing your fan database.
4. Not only will you reach more people through their networks, but together you could create awareness of some special cause and consider donating % of proceeds – either ticket, CD or merchandise sales.
5. Create innovative competitions and you may grab media attention
6. Get innovation with the Merchandise that promotes your brand. What else could people use other than T Shirts. Hats, Bags, Shoelaces, Keyrings or Dongles?
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
17. Fans

It's not just the relationships in the industry that count; it's the fans, the rival bands not to mention the girlfriends and boyfriends, husbands and wives 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. Consider all these relationships, set up agreements, 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. Communications Plan and Agreement
6. Operation Plan
7. Succession Plan
8. Strategic Plan

Influence



Can you measure the worth of your influence in this industry?

Can you measure the worth of your influence in this genre?

Can you measure the worth of your influence in this city?

Can you measure the worth of your influence in this region?

Can 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?
- What is your Point of Difference?
- Why would someone go to your gig?
- 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 and 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 blog daily – have something to talk about.
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.



Learn to leverage the stuff that sucks! Like we said in the Introduction, we have done every shit gig and experienced some major challenges in the 21 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.

1. Make a list of everything that you think sucks in this industry
2. Make a list of all the challenges that you have encountered
3. Look around you, in local businesses, in politics, in other bands, in your industry and list the challenges that other people face at the moment.
4. 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.
5. 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, Facebook, Blogspot and connect and build your audience. We do everything on line now so if you are not on line you won't even be considered as a credible Music Industry player. Get yourself on line! 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. Apply for a Branding and Publicity Campaign with Pressing Issues. 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 at the next Gigahertz concert. If you don't yet pull 100 – 150 heads, apply to perform in regular Local Licks shows.
5. Apply for Support Opportunities in our Touring Calendars. Email your EPK to lauren@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. Contact Michael Geeves in Maximize Entertainment – Michael@pushworth.com. 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. Want free tickets? Sign up to get your Push Pass for Guest List Allocations.
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. Everyone in our business does whatever is needed. She didn't last long. ☺
11. Build your influence gradually. Credibility, experience and result history cannot be googled – they are earned over years.

All Photographs courtesy of Pieter Brits.
www.pieterbrits.com

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