

Corporate entertainment performances - a charter of etiquette



By [Tim Hill](#)

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In a substantial number of conversations that I have had with many established artist booking agents and high-end event organisers, there are a definite number behavioural elements by artists that impress them and there are a number of things that severely disappoint them - resulting in an artist or band never being hired again.

Here are a few pointers for performers and bands getting booked for that corporate gig:

Respond quickly with all the information

A fast and professional response to a potential booking query is essential. Respond with exactly what they want and more - availability, price, set up options, technical rider, hospitality rider, cover repertoire, a biography and a press photo. Also be open to negotiating your price within reason. A lower percentage of what you are used to is better than 100% of nothing.

It can happen that event planners get so caught up in the logistics and don't provide the information you require. Be proactive and ask for the address of the venue and times for set up, sound check, what time you need to be there and, of course, performance time.

Up-sell yourself

It isn't appropriate to have your banner up or sell albums at a corporate event, but what is stopping you from recommending that the client buys a few hundred copies of your album as corporate gifts? Be smart, you can increase your revenue and no agent or organiser is opposed to innovative thinking that can add value to his or her client.

Be punctual

Be on time all of the time. This applies to the artist, management and the band. If you know there is going to be traffic, leave earlier. If you know that the gig is out of town or in an area that you are not familiar with, leave earlier. If you get caught up in a traffic jam, it is expected that you call to say that you are running late. It is perceived as disrespectful and unprofessional if you are not on time.

Give thanks

Greet and thank the host. It is etiquette to politely introduce yourself to the host and also to thank him or her at the end of the event. This will leave a lasting good impression and you may be booked again.

Give them what they want, but be adaptable

Follow the brief given by the organiser, yet have a back up plan just in case the audience and atmosphere isn't as expected. Usually a corporate client will ask for two sets - one slower, one more up beat. However, sometimes this doesn't quite work and you have a flat crowd and the vibe needs to be uplifted somewhat. Have an extra two sets planned - an additional chilled one and an additional rocking one.

Get your cover versions together

Cover versions of well-known songs have to be a given. It is great to play your own music, but remember that the audience

is there to booze it up on the company's tab and not there to listen to you. You are the background music. The chances are that the majority of the audience won't know you or your music, therefore they will respond better to songs that they do know. If you have a number of radio hits that people will know, then by all means, include them in the set.

Keep it tidy

Unless you are invited by the host to join in on the festivities, stick to your zone. If you want a few beers or have an appetite before the show, prepare in advance and give the organiser a hospitality rider. It is not your party and mingling and partying it up with the guests can, in some circumstances, be seen as presumptuous.

If you do get invited to join the party, keep it tidy and do everything in moderation. Remember that you want to keep the professional relationship alive and you want to be invited back so mingle, start building that relationship, but do it in a way that you don't make an idiot out of yourself. This is your income.

The no-go zone

Keep the boundaries between you and your client. Shagging, snogging and flirting with any of the client's team create an open door to disaster and can manifest a storm within the company. You want to be invited back, keep it in your pants!

A small entourage

Keep your team to a minimum - management and the band, and in some instances the sound guy. Boyfriends, girlfriends, wives, husbands etc. are not welcome. They can come to any other gig of yours, but a corporate function is off limits. It is not your show. It may seem trivial, but an extra body can throw the budget and the seating plans, if you are invited to sit at a table. Keep in mind that with many corporate functions, the staff's spouses aren't even invited in order to keep the costs down.

Remain professional

Always remain professional and courteous. There may be situations that present challenges such as poor sound, or a late running schedule. The best plan would be to contact the sound engineer a couple of days before hand and run through sound and other technical requirements. The running order very rarely runs to time. Factor an extra couple of hours in to your schedule just in case.

Wrapping it up

To conclude, a corporate client can book any artist he or she wants to, but he or she has booked you because of your public profile or via recommendation. There are certain expectations and these need to be met. Aside from putting on a killer show, your goal should be to be invited back to perform again. Get them to buy in to you once and you will be sorted. Do this by keeping it professional and make it easy for all parties to give you repeat business.

ABOUT TIM HILL

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