

Here's Part II of preparing to tour. My first part was from a sound engineer's point. This article will cover some of the other facets of touring.

One of the hardest jobs you'll have is finding a really good tour manager for your act. I can't tell you how many acts who hire a relative or a 'best friend' who's never been on the road or has no organizational skills whatsoever and is just basically a 'yes' man and is out there to party with the band.

A good tour manager becomes a part of your management team. On the road, they're going to be responsible for more things than you can imagine - transportation, hotels, tickets and passes, meet-and-greets, and sometimes accounting.

Think about this. The largest cost of a person on the road isn't salary; it's all the other expenses involved. If your act can eliminate one person on the road, you can give that person's entire salary to someone else and still save hundreds of dollars a day on airfares, hotels, per diems and so on. This is why it pays to find a tour manager who can also do your tour accounting.

preparing to tour

To be a good tour manager, that person HAS to have strong management and people skills, and the ability to juggle and coordinate a lot of things daily. It would also be helpful if this person is even-tempered, because things do go wrong constantly. This person should also have problem-solving skills and quick good judgment.

More Tips For The Road

NEVER speak negatively to the Press about internal band problems, management, record label or any other problems. Always project a positive image to the press and the outside world of the touring party.

Dealing With Airports

If you're stuck at the airport, head for a pay phone (or use your cell phone). While people are waiting endlessly in line, you can be on the phone with your travel agent or with the airline itself. Even if you rebook through a travel agent or the airline's toll-free number, you'll still need to get your ticket validated at the original flight's gate. Non-stop flights, flights early in the day, and non-holiday weekends are least likely to be delayed.

Dealing With Hotels

When booking hotel rooms for budget-minded tours. Have your travel agent check in to these hotels: Scottish Inns, EconoLodge, Howard Johnson's, Fairfield Inns,

Miscellaneous Stuff

For Europe: Make sure you get the registration numbers and vehicle details of all touring vehicles for promoters in different countries during a European tour. Some countries require that you get a Sunday driving permit for your trucks.

Get management to get online so that in case you miss a FAX at the hotel, your pager is accidentally turned off or whatever that you have another option for people to get in touch with you. Call the booking agent almost everyday during the tour to make sure all deposits have been received and if there have been any last minute changes.

To save money, when someone requests photos, CDs, posters or anything else, have them give you their Fed-Ex # instead of using your own. If you have a tour where all the band gear won't fit in the bays of your bus, and you don't want to rent

Quality Inns, Super 8, Red Roof Inns, Hampton Inns, Travelodge, Red Carpet Inn, Motel 6, Comfort Inn, Days Inn, LaQuinta Inn, Passport Inns.

Try to book hotels that have free local phone calls and free continental breakfast. Keep the Do Not Disturb sign on the door at all times, and set the radio to a talk station when you're out. Don't hang the "Make up Room" sign on the door at your hotel. It announces to the world that you are out. Instead, call Housekeeping and request that your room be cleaned. Always ask if you can upgrade your airline seat, hotel room or rental car, whether or not you are entitled to it. It never hurts to ask.

Keep a photocopy of your passport with you at all times in case you lose the original. Don't leave anything of value in your room. Thieves know all the hiding places.

a truck and driver, consider pulling a trailer. DOT rules stipulate that you can have 60' on the highway. This would make it a 45' bus and a 15' trailer. The drawback to this is that you should request a bus with at least 8 cylinders for additional power when driving through the mountains. Another drawback is that it's an additional strain on tires and your rear axle. If you're playing at a Fair, try to get the promoter to include some free ride tickets for your band and crew. This can be a great stress reliever. For days off, look up the Ticketmaster Web site to find out what shows are on in the city you're going to have a day off in.

Take lots of books; buy pre-paid phone cards; hotel discount coupons are available at truck stops; get CAA/AAA. Remember to get fuel and use the bathroom before entering a big city. Make sure your spare tire and jack are easily accessible. Travel with

Don't assume your travel agent has made your hotel reservation correctly. Get confirmation numbers and the name of the clerk who took the reservation. There's nothing worse than a late-night arrival at a full hotel that's never heard of you. Get a hotel room above the second or third floor to lessen the risk of break-in (especially for women). Use the hotel safe deposit box even if there is a fee.

If you have any problems checking in and request the Manager on Duty and the front desk can't give you access to him/her, use the House Phone and call the Manager on Duty directly.

When booking hotels, make sure to ask your travel agent if the hotel has an elevator. If not, make sure the agent books all of your rooms on the ground floor. Luggage can be quite heavy to lift up a flight of stairs.

your own mirror because a lot of the smaller clubs won't have dressing rooms, let alone mirrors in them. For shows in high altitudes, always advance Oxygen and a oxygen mask.

That's about it!

David '5-1' Norman has tour managed and/or production managed and mixed such acts as; Roger Daltrey, Ani DiFranco, Aaron Neville & The Neville Brothers, The British Rock Symphony, John Tesh, They Might Be Giants, Arrested Development, Better than Ezra, B.B. King, The Fugees, Wyclef Jean and many others. He is currently doing freelance work for Concert/Southern Promotions as Production Manager and has worked shows with 'Weird Al' Yankovic, Ratdog, Kid Rock, Queensryche, System of a Down, Coal Chamber, Powerman 5000, The Indigo Girls, Marc Anthony, Smash Mouth, Luscious Jackson and Megadeth. He can be reached online at david994@aol.com or you can check out his Web site at <http://members.aol.com/david994/>.

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