

**CONFIDENT  
DRUMMER**

# Drumming Career Tips and Inspiration

How to  
Effectively  
Manage your Career  
as a Drummer

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# **Confident Drummer**

Free Resources

**Drumming Career Tips & Inspiration**

Confident Drummer Series

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## Advanced Drum Education Portal

Become A Musician Who Plays The Drums.

All The Rarely Talked About Topics, Covered In Depth To Help  
You Fully Understand The Art Of Drumming.

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# How to Effectively Manage your Career as a Drummer

We are so lucky to play this amazing instrument! To make the most of this privilege we can learn some new ways to handle and optimize all the things that happen before and after playing.

I'd like to summarize in a few pages what I've figured out during many years of trial and error, attempts and personal experiences in the field.

And also my understanding of how to make things happen in this business.

By the way, the ideas we are going to discuss are extremely important even if we want to make music just for fun and for the joy of it.

The only requirement is a burning passion for drumming.

Let's get started by keeping in mind that nothing is impossible in life, and whatever a person can do, another person can do.

Really, that's how things actually are, everything else is just our thoughts, self-doubt and insecurities that come up and limit us for no reason.

So, we simply have a few steps that separate us from our goal. To cover all of them we need to take action in a specific direction.

Unfortunately, unlike in other professions, there is no predetermined path that takes us from school to the stage.

It's a complex process that takes years of disciplined effort.

We must take responsibility, design a strategy and make adjustments by paying attention to what is giving us results.

Also today competition is really strong even in the world of music, and it's clear that there are more good drummers around than music situations available.

So we can't afford to waste any chance.

Yet, if you know what you are doing, there are amazing gigs waiting for you out there.

Let's keep in mind that, no matter how tough it may seem today, the world is full of opportunities, situations, money, and there will always be room for one more great drummer.

Also, there will always be top acts in need for great players.

Now, the first step towards achieving anything, is figuring out exactly what it is that we want to make happen, when we want it, and why, in great detail.

Just taking care of this step would be more than enough to stay focused and make great music while being fulfilled with our playing.

Think about it, if we don't know what we want, how are we ever going to get it?

If we don't know when, how are we going to keep track of our progress and know that we are going in the right direction?

If we don't know why, how can we stay motivated and determined when things get tough?

That's why I recommend cultivating a clear mental picture of what being a drummer means to us, and exactly how we see ourselves making music in the future.

The first thing we need to realize is that being a drummer might mean many different things.

Do you want to be in a band and tour and make records with it? Would you like to pursue a career as an independent player who does sessions?

Do you need to express your creative side and experiment with new ways of making music with like-minded musicians?

Or maybe you'd love to be a clinician who travels around the world and reaches thousands of drummers with his empowering vision and philoso-

phy?

Would you like to play the best clubs and festivals with your jazz quartet? Do you desire to teach?

Do you want to specialize in one style of music or be a seasoned pro who can handle any music genre?

Would you like to start a YouTube Channel as an artist or educator?

Obviously, the possibilities are endless, and obviously none of them excludes any other.

We can make music in many of these ways simultaneously if we choose to.

But, it is critical that instead of saying, very vaguely 'I want to be the best I can', we are a lot more specific and start thinking about the details: 'Within the next 5 years I want to study with that master, I want to be playing in that kind of band, I want to be teaching to at least 20 students, I want to improve these 3 areas of my drumming, I want to record 10 albums'.

See the difference?

It's the power of setting goals. Short, medium, and long term goals that reflect who we are.

To put it simply we could say that all we need to succeed is to decide what we want, figure out the price, and then pay it.

Obviously, the more effort we have invested, the more prepared we are, the better we can provide high standards in different professional situations. And so the more options we have.

As a matter of fact, my personal approach to making music and possibly making a living with it, is based on great preparation, versatility and flexibility, so that my musical experience is never linked to a single situation or outcome, and I can count on a number of things going on simultaneously, instead.

With this strategy the chances of having great results, either as professionals or as passionate amateurs, will be automatically much higher.

All of it with the very interesting side effect of automatically building a network that may lead to cool and unexpected new situations.

Also the reason why we do the things we decide we want to do is very important.

We have to check with our values and keep our actions aligned with them.

Without getting too philosophical, I'd like to suggest that if our goals are based on noble values, on love for music, and on a strong character, we are going to move toward them almost effortlessly.

And we can be pretty sure that we will reach them, totally fulfilled in our musical endeavors.

Character is destiny.

It's important to point out that in setting any goal, there are 3 basic ideas we shouldn't overlook: it should be a mature objective (I want to have a million followers so that my friends can see how cool I am...), it should be realistic (I'm going to make \$1000 a show within 6 months from now) and, it should at least in part adapt to the surrounding environment (I only exclusively want to play with my experimental trio...).

Then, regarding this last point, what if the place where we live doesn't offer much from a musical standpoint?

Well, the tough answer is that we should consider leaving and moving to a place where what we want to achieve is more likely to happen.

As a matter of fact, even if today we can do almost everything remotely, real-life experiences and interactions are still indispensable for musicians.

There are two keys to any success: first we need to be in places where what we want to do is already happening.

And then we need to be around the people who are already doing it (as we are going to see in a minute).

As soon as we understand what making music means to us and what might be suitable for us and our drumming vision, we can move on and examine a number of aspects that, if we are purposeful and dedicated musicians, will allow us to make a living with this wonderful form of art.

We are going to talk about them separately:

- Preparation and formative years.
- Experience.
- Human relationships.
- Using the Internet the smart way.
- Our network.

## PREPARATION AND FORMATIVE YEARS:

We can't afford to get started without a solid foundation based on work ethics.

Forget about the notion of talent and luck, at least temporarily, and get down to work.

Today the technical standard on the drums is really high, nobody can count just on being gifted and pretend that practicing is not that important.

By all means always trust your innate ability, but also nurture it through a disciplined and persistent research and study.

Use your ears and figure out what needs to be improved, find a teacher or some kind of mentor (even a few virtual ones, online etc.) and do what needs to be done.

Keep in mind that there's no finish line, and a great way grow and sound amazing is to have a constant desire to get better and seek to reach the next level, for the sake of enhanced musical expression.

Choose schools and environments where there are people who are already good at what you want to do.

As we already said, one of the best ways to reach any result is to have a reference group that can guide you and show you the ideal path to go where you want to go.

Also, you've probably heard that in order to master anything we need at least 10.000 hours of practice.

I did the math for you: with one hour a day it will take you 27 years to become a great drummer, with 3 hours a day it will take 9 years.

Practice 8 hours a day and you'll be an expert in just 3 years (of course it's a simplification, but you get the point).

I'm only going to add that in my opinion in order to sound fantastic on the drums the hours required are at least 20.000.

Think about it, it's the hours (and their quality), not the years you've been playing.

## EXPERIENCE:

No matter what we are learning, there comes a day when we go from the practice room to the stage, and that day is typically a pretty tough one. Why?

The thing is that there are aspects of playing the drums that we won't be aware of until we are right there, live, on stage, doing it!

Playing with other people, being on a stage, knowing you are being recorded, and so on, means dealing with hundreds of little adjustments that you can't understand unless you have experienced these situations many times.

The more experience you gather in every possible musical context, the more you will figure out things that simply are not written in any book or can't be taught by any teacher.

The faster you will grow as a musician. Exponentially.

Each experience counts and is valuable. Then, overtime, you can become more and more selective about the quality of the situations you are in, based also on your preferences.

I've had periods when I played in 10 bands at the same time. After many years when nearly everything was good enough, I became gradually more selective, until I defined my personal basic rule to decide whether or not considering joining a project: either I am learning something and there's art in it, or I am making some money, otherwise I'm not interested.

Please note that, although this process took me almost 20 years and I'm a professional drummer, I'm always looking for new things that can make me grow and I'm still open to making music for the sake of it.

Learning and growing as a musician, to me, is even more valuable than money.

Lastly, let's stress that one of the most powerful shortcuts to improve as musicians is to play with people that are better than us.

## HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS:

If you are irresponsible, unreliable or arrogant, you are going to have a hard time in the music business, no matter how good you are (and let me add... you deserve it...).

I always say that playing the drums is art as soon as we count off the song, but, until then and as soon as we get off stage, it's a job like anything else, and it should be treated that way.

Being on time, flexible, adaptable, authentic, social, nice, even funny if you will, are the cornerstones on which to base all your musical endeavors. And are things that will likely separate you from most drummers.

Human beings are emotional creatures, and we want to be around peo-

ple who make us feel good.

Then, if on top of all this you can actually play, you are all set ;-).

On the other hand, if you tend to have a hidden agenda or to take advantage of situations and others, the day you pay for your unethical behaviours always comes. It's just a matter of time.

Your reputation is one of your greatest assets as a drummer.

Making music means interacting with other people, socializing, creating human relationships and friendships, and therefore requires at least some degree of social skills – and honesty.

Knowing how to make yourself stand out without looking arrogant, being able to get along with others, understanding other people's point of view, are all things that can make your professional life easier while also making it a lot more satisfying.

All musicians and all people involved in the process of making music, are just regular human beings.

They have a private life, they have stuff going on all the time, responsibilities, families, problems.

Just knowing and understanding this will make your interactions much more authentic – though professional when necessary - and will naturally make you develop deeper relationships with the people you meet.

Learn to respect others' opinions, points of view, even criticism toward you.

Let them respect you while not coming across as overly assertive, deal with conflict like an adult by clarifying situations as soon as they arise, and develop transparent relationships with everybody.

## USING THE INTERNET THE SMART WAY:

I'm not going to talk about the web because we need help in this area... but because we need to slow down a bit with all this virtual life.

We are all masters in front of a screen: social media, posting something new every 20 minutes, cool profiles on each platform in existence, websites, videos, pictures, stories, all kinds of stuff.

And I'm the first one to do it, I have to admit, because all these things do work.

But, let me tell you, if you focus just on the Internet and on creating a perfect online image of yourself as a drummer, while neglecting everything else, you are taking a huge risk.

The web is great because it allows us to project an image of who we are and what we do, it's a place where we can share audio and video material about us, and most of all it makes it easier to build a network and create valuable online communities, which can indeed help us make a living with music.

Creating a credible online presence is therefore an important part of being a working musician.

Yet it's not necessarily where our best chances come from. Nobody has ever seen a post that read 'Drummer wanted for pro gig, paid rehearsals, recording sessions and touring'.

Also we can count on the fingers of one hand the artists that have been discovered by someone watching their content on YouTube.

If your goal is to meet music professionals and have lots of new opportunities, then it's important that, while taking advantage of these resources, at the same time you work on increasing the number of people you know in person.

So, definitely take care of your social profiles, but then let them go and let them work for you, while you focus on cultivating real relationships.

However let me clarify: there's another side of the coin. The web has generated incredible new opportunities for all creative people, because it makes it possible to instantly reach everyone on the planet, for free.

So, if you are a creator, and you have amazing ideas, there's never been in human history a better time to share what you have to say with millions of people.

Today you can start a YouTube channel, open a profile on some trendy platform, publish some kind of digital content, and have a blast and make a living with that.

There are so many ways to monetize a successful social media presence: affiliate links, sponsors, ads, merchandise, monetized views, tips, you name it.

My point is this: it's one of the most amazing opportunities out there now, but we have to be aware of two downsides.

First of all, competition is crazy, because it's extended to the entire planet.

You could start publishing top-notch content and go nowhere, for no reason.

Just because it gets lost in the billions of pages and files available online and somehow the algorithm doesn't like it.

Second, we need to start realizing that virtuality is alienating. We have evolved to interact with people in front of us, not on a screen. We just don't work like that, no matter how many online friends we have.

In the long run, this tends to lead to avoidance or real human interactions, and to actual opportunities getting more and more limited.

Yet the need for human contact is still there. Have you noticed that you like a lot more online content with people that talk, that interact, that get as close as possible to reality, within the confines of the digital realm?

It's because that's how people function.

However, we all pay attention to the few ones that made it big online, and think we want that too. And I'm totally with you, I run a Drum Portal! The crucial distinction is that I don't exclusively focus on that.

So use the Internet, wisely, in a balanced way, just don't get lost in it. Make it a spice that you add to your career, don't make it the main course.

The best way to use the web is creating value for others, and then forgetting about it. Not trying to get attention.

Value as a drummer can be in the form of education, art, entertainment, emotions, advice, music, videos.

You can be as creative as you want.

Of course, the exception to this reasoning is that, since one of the ways to get results in life is to invest on just one thing, you may have such a clear and compelling vision about the way you are gonna explode online, that for you it's the right thing to do.

If that's your situation, letting go of everything else is likely to be the most effective strategy, with all your energies very focused.

In this case, go for it!

What's a lot wiser for most of us is to invest a good deal of our energies in growing our experience in the field and increasing the amount of people that know who we are, in person.

You may not make it as big, but it's a much more realistic way to approach things - and it leads to more fulfilling experiences.

In fact I believe that the most important factor, which has always made the most difference if we want to be full time drummers, is:

## OUR NETWORK:

Yes! Our network, that is, the people we know. There's nothing wrong with someone recommending us for a job.

If your name is mentioned because you are really good, then you are happy, the person who's getting to know you is happy, the person who recommended you is happy.

That's just perfect! It can happen at different levels: another musician, a sound engineer, a producer, a roadie, all kinds of people you may have impressed with your awesome skills.

So you see how important it is to always be flawless as far as behaving correctly towards other people, while of course staying focused on sounding your best, as you never know who is listening.

A really smart approach is to consistently set aside a certain amount of time to work on expanding your network.

Which will grow exponentially, as each new contact can result in a lot more people knowing you, in kind of a domino effect.

I have a good friend who is a guitarist and is great at this stuff. He is the kind of person that always picks up the phone and calls the people he wants to connect with. Producers, musicians he admires, people in the music industry he would like to work with.

No emails, no friend requests/follow/subscribe on a social network, he just calls, 'May I talk to ...' whoever...

Then he introduces himself, and he goes 'Let's have lunch together sometime!'

Of course he knows what he's doing, he doesn't come across as a weirdo, he goes like 'Hi, I appreciate your work, I've done some work like this and that, why don't we have a nice chat about music while having lunch together sometime". Something very laid-back along these lines.

A little while ago, after one of those meetings with a producer he ended up working with a big pop act and touring with this name artist.

Do you think he could ever get this far by sending a thousand messages

on LinkedIn and saying 'These are my vids, please watch them and let me know what you think', or by posting a new video every day, hoping that the right person would stumble across it?

And he is a great musician, but by changing approach, everything changes.

That's what people still love to do, interact with others in person, see your face, form an impression of you based on how you carry yourself, and not just a video on a popular platform.

So that they can know they can trust you.

The way to do this, is to just focus on giving, not on trying to get something... which works as a great general rule of course, in any human interaction.

For instance, have you noticed how some unknown players are hiring top names to work on their projects?

That's a great example of this approach. They don't contact them like, please notice how good I am... They go, 'Hey, I want the best on my record, so I'd love to hire you for this session'. They provide value.

Then, if you are really great, they will one day remember you.

Personally, in the last 10 years, maybe 95% of all the situations that turned into paying gigs came from somebody that knew me from a previous collaboration and remembered me when they were in need of a drummer.

Just 3 simple rules: find the right people, develop relationships with them + keep in touch, and give value to them.

Let's not forget 2 great examples of what I was saying before about the importance of being around people that already do what you want to do, and in the place where that is already happening: Matt Flynn and Tyler Zarzeka, two great drummers, were touring as drum techs for the bands they ended up playing with!

Pure networking in action.

So, to sum it up, keep in mind that in order to achieve any goal, and therefore even any goal in music, there are 3 rules:

1- Know exactly what you want - Then be ready to pay the price.

2- Use the best strategy - And, as we have already said, what's the best strategy, the one that has more chances of working out? The one used by whoever has already reached the results you are looking for.

3- Never give up, stay determined, positive and focused, even when you go through the toughest times - And the best way to keep up the motivation, long term, is to have goals aligned to who you are, which give you a strong why.

All right, I hope you've found some valid information in this booklet, and that you've found a little inspiration to go make something happen real soon.

I'm aware there is no single guaranteed way to get from point A to point B. These ideas are just a compilation of things I've seen working the most, overtime.

I also like the fact that, in my opinion, they are aligned to a desire to make music with love, heart, passion and authenticity.

Nonetheless I invite you to evaluate all you've just read with your own mind and find what works for you, so that you can make the most out of your career.

I wish you all the best in drumming!

If you are interested in these topics you can find out more in my method 'Career & Business', in which I elaborate on this subject in great detail.

It's more than 110 pages of in depth analysis of all elements of being a professional drummer, including music business, personal effectiveness, music industry roles and so on.

You can learn more and download the table of content by clicking here:

['Career & Business' - Altitude Drumming - Volume 11](#)