

THE CAREER MUSICIAN

ETHOS
ETHOS
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ETHOS

5 GAME-CHANGERS

EVERY MUSICIAN MUST KNOW
TO MAKE MONEY MAKING MUSIC

BY MICHAEL NOMAD RIPOLL

FOREWORD DAVID FOSTER

**THE
CAREER 
MUSICIAN**

ETHOS

The Career Musician's Code

How To Stop Chasing Gigs And
Start Building Your Music Career

Michael **NOMAD** Ripoll

ETHOS

The Career Musician's Code

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To learn more about The Career Musician, visit
TheCareerMusician.com

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to those who have inspired and shaped me into the Career Musician I am today:

To my father, Robert Jesús Osvaldo Ripoll, a stoic man who instilled in me many strong characteristics. He gave me the gift of music, the ability to think for myself, and innate grit. For this, I am forever grateful. Rest in peace my hero, I love you beyond words.



NOMAD and His Dad

To my second hero, Edward Van Halen, who inspired me to dust off the guitar from under my bed after watching him on MTV back in 1984. May he also rest in peace as one of the greatest guitar heroes of all time.

To Ric Feliciano, Steve Preziosi, Gary Goldman, Jack Covell, Michael Di Liddo, and Vincent Bredice; the music teachers who helped cultivate my talents and

teach me the fundamental principles of music theory, harmony, arranging and guitar technique.

To Rogelio “Gordi” González, who mentored me in countless late-night studio sessions helping me hone my studio chops.

To the spirits of Frankie Santoriello and Daryl Kunesh, who respectively instilled in me the passion and the technical aspects of music. May you both rest in peace in the eternal heavenly band of greats.

Foreword

By David Foster

I have had the great pleasure of sharing the stage with Michael “NOMAD” Ripoll many, many times. It is always a musical and personal treat. He’s an incredible and inspiring guitarist.

As I was cruising through some of **The Career Musician Podcast** episodes, I realized just how deep music runs through his veins and how incredibly knowledgeable he is; not only of all things musical, but of life and how to squeeze the most out of it.

I’m always suspicious of someone writing a “How To” book because so many “authors” on this subject have not walked the walk. However, Nomad has been in the hot seat for decades. He’s been where many musicians and performers want to go. He’s believable because he has lived it and has all the credentials to back it up.

Read this book and learn from someone who has actually done all the things that you want to do and accomplish!

Nomad is the real deal and you can quote me on that!

-David Foster

Multi-Award Winning Mega Producer and Songwriter



NOMAD and David Foster

Preface

Growing up, my father always told me that art and commerce don't mix. I never really understood this until I started working in music. As musicians, we create unique works of art that are intangible; unlike visual artists who get to physically touch what they create. Sculptures, paintings, and photos are all tangible proof that the art exists. For music the boundaries are fleeting because music must be experienced, not seen. As music artists, it's impossible to place a value on our talent. Truth be told, it's priceless. Whether or not society values our work is irrelevant, as long as we believe in ourselves. The long road to discovery as an independent artist can be daunting and sometimes fruitless. In order to have a successful career, we must figure out a way to subsidize our passion for the art that we create.

It's difficult to convince people that our art is valuable or has any viability. If someone doesn't happen upon our work by chance, without solicitation, they tend to see it as less valuable. However, if we can attach our artistic expression to another artist's work who already has mass recognition, then we could potentially monetize

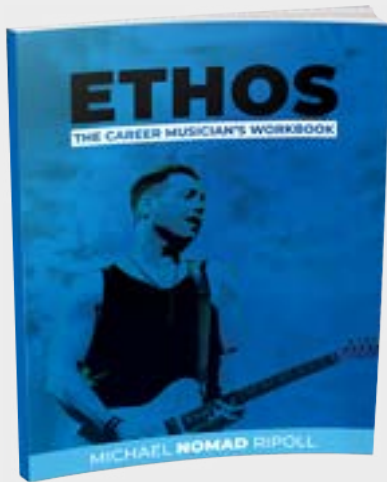
our hard-earned talent. It is at this point that art and commerce *do* mix. Learning this at a young age, I began to figure out ways that I could earn a living while still playing my guitar. If no one else could see the value in my own original music, then my next option was to be a *hired gun* and work for others; assisting them with bringing their music to the masses. This became an integral part of my career; which gave me a unique sense of artistic fulfillment in and of itself.

When I discovered that being a session and touring musician was an option, I was hooked and utterly inspired by the stories of A-List studio cats and world-touring pros like: Tommy Tedesco, Dean Parks, Paul Jackson Jr., Jennifer Batten, Leland Sklar, Carol Kaye, Steve Lukather, Luis Conte, Steve Gadd, Nathan East, John “JR” Robinson, Michael Thompson, Sheila E., Ricky Lawson, Dominic Miller, Pino Palladino, Patrice Rushen, Tim Pierce, Tom Scott, Chester Thompson, Greg Phillinganes, and the list goes on! I vividly remember the day that I was sitting at the dining room table with my mother explaining to her that I wanted to be a professional musician, but not as the star. I wanted to be in the background behind the curtain. I wanted to be the kind of musician who plays on hit records, TV show and film soundtracks, and supports other artists on tour. This career decision presented a challenge: How will I rise above the noise and get connected?

Getting that one special gig is a difficult task. The “Everyone out for themselves” mentality of the music business makes it difficult to create solid connections and stay afloat. It’s a struggle for most musicians to get a gig, keep the gig, and build a career with longevity. The contents of this book will shed light on the subculture of musicians and the social hierarchy therein. It will also lay out a path for you to follow in your pursuit of becoming a full-time professional musician. It is my sincerest hope that musicians who read this book hold themselves to a higher standard which I call—**ETHOS | The Career Musician’s Code.**

Disclaimer

I am not a licensed attorney, financial advisor, or therapist. I speak solely from my experience as a fully-fledged career musician over the past thirty years. If you need any legal, financial, or psychiatric advice, please seek assistance from the appropriate professionals.



ETHOS | THE CAREER MUSICIAN'S WORKBOOK

Throughout my thirty years as a Career Musician, I have developed various document templates and compiled all the necessary information that will help you along your journey. The Career Musician exists to empower you with strategies for a sustainable career; so take advantage of it! To accompany this book I have created a resource entitled **ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook**. In this workbook, you will find a series of worksheets and templates to help optimize the development of your business. Download the workbook at proseries.thecareermusician.com/ethosworkbook

What It Takes To Be A Career Musician

What Is A Career Musician?

A career musician is someone who makes a living from being a full-time musician. More than a hobby and playing occasional gigs with friends, it's a chosen career! In order to be a full-time musician you must immerse yourself in many different avenues of the business to create multiple streams of income. Local gigs, sessions, teaching, producing, touring, royalties from songwriting or composing; together they make up your collective income. It's important to keep in mind that it takes time to establish yourself. Remember, nobody starts out on top.

If you currently have a "day job," do not be discouraged. The purpose of this book is to help you become a successful career musician. Early in my career I had a part-time job at a bagel shop not too far from my apartment in Nashville. I would start my day at 4am, work from 5am to noon, go home to practice and record, then hit the local gig scene at night. Whatever it takes, right?

What will separate the dreamers from the achievers is the ability to apply the methods in this book to their daily efforts in order to maintain a long-lasting career. The key to this is orchestrating multiple streams of income creating stability for yourself and for your family. If you are serious about being a career musician, then let's start with the first building block of your career's foundation; the concept of *ETHOS*. Ethos will give you the advantage you need in this crazy business we call music!

What Is ETHOS?

Ethos is the Greek word for custom or character. Aristotle referred to it as a person's character or personality, especially in its balance between passion and caution. As artists, we are caught in the middle of this constant battle between our passion (music) and our caution (fear). Fears come in all varieties. There is fear of not having enough money to support ourselves. There is fear of not being able to provide for our loved ones. There is fear of being rejected, not being validated, and most commonly, there is fear of failure. It's difficult to focus on being creative when we're strapped for cash or bogged down by fear. Now more than ever, musicians are having to reassess their careers, figure out how to pivot, and reinvent themselves just to get by. If we take a moment to zoom

out and apply a set of guidelines to being a career musician, it will be much easier to overcome adversity when the going gets tough.

If more musicians vowed to honor a code of ethics in all interactions, our community would be a little easier to navigate. Have you ever been considered for a gig only to be pushed out by someone low-balling you? Have you ever had to wait a month or more to get paid for a session or gig? Have you ever been slandered by another musician trying to tarnish your reputation so they can get the gig instead? Can you imagine a Doctor doing this? Or any professional for that matter? As much as these scenarios are commonplace in the music industry, that's no excuse. There is something to be said about synergistic relationships in which everyone treats each other with respect. Having respect for the business, love for the music and professional courtesy will always prevail.

If you're thinking, "It's just music, why should I commit to an *ETHOS*?" Well, think about it this way; judges, lawyers, doctors, nurses, military, and first responders all commit to a code of ethics which goes beyond themselves and makes them accountable to a higher purpose. Why shouldn't you? In the medical field the Hippocratic Oath defines responsibilities and dictates

that medical professionals promise to serve others regardless of race, creed, or religion. Another way to think of ETHOS is as a Code of Conduct; which is a set of guidelines that outline the expectations, rules, responsibilities, and proper practices of an individual or institution. These ethical codes are adopted by groups and organizations to assist its members in understanding the difference between right and wrong and are principles designed to help professionals conduct business with integrity.

Codes of ethics revolve around the concept of a person's character or value system. The problem is not everyone in the music industry adheres to the same code; or any code at all for that matter! The purpose of **ETHOS | The Career Musician's Code**, is to instill a code of ethics; showing how professional musicians should treat one another and conduct themselves while carrying out their business.

As artists, we are fueled by emotion. It's important that we don't get our emotions entangled in our business dealings. When performing our music, we must channel inspiration from the muse and run with it. On the other hand, to conduct business, we must operate without letting our emotions get the best of us. Simply put, the stage is not the boardroom and vice versa.

There is a certain set of criteria that belong to both. It is important that in each aspect of our careers, we have a full understanding of how to act accordingly. “Time and place, read the room, know your audience”, all come to mind. Once we master this, our work will become much easier to manage and we will be able to shift seamlessly between the two idioms. When you communicate effectively with others on both sides of the music industry (business and creative), your career will progress even further. I’ve witnessed this transformation in my own life and I am here to show you how to do it!

Let’s be real. None of us got into music because we thought it would pay well or that we’d become rich. We started playing music because we fell in love with it! The urge to play is what keeps us all coming back for more. If you think you’re going to strike it rich playing music, I’ll save you some time: “Put this f*****g book down because it wasn’t written for you!” I wrote this book to bring you to the realization that you are able, you can achieve success, and you will reach your goals if you commit yourself to this *ETHOS* which took me thirty years to cultivate and develop. I am living proof that it works. Now, I realize the idea of success can mean many different things to different people. The success I’m talking about is being able to sustain a career with your musical talents.

ETHOS | The Career Musician's Code will help you condition your mind to survive the ongoing rollercoaster of emotions you're likely to experience throughout your career. If you've answered the calling to be a life-long musician, then you understand the burning desire within. There's nothing you can do to squelch it! Make the best of it by implementing a system that grants you peace on a difficult path to success. Amongst other qualities, success in any business requires skill, knowledge, experience, perseverance, confidence, resilience, discipline, and most of all, integrity. Without a code of ethics, the pitfalls of lesser integrity will eventually come to haunt you. It is my belief that we shouldn't compete against one another. We must stop treating music as a contest; measuring who has the most followers, the biggest bank account, the longer list of awards, etc. We all need to band together (pun intended) by helping one another in our journey toward the greater good. What greater good? The greater good of spreading our gift of music. It's the gift that was bestowed upon us and it is our duty to share it with the world.

There are five pillars to the concept of *ETHOS*. By adhering to these five pillars, we can become the best versions of ourselves and inspire others while doing so.

The 5 Pillars Of ETHOS

Energy: A little thing that makes a BIG difference.
Attitude + Vibe = Energy

Talent: We all have some sort of talent, it's what we do with it that matters.

Humility: Do I even really need to say it? Be humble.
Don't be a jerk.

Objectivity: Emotions have no place in the workplace.
Remain objective.

Savvy: It's all about the biz. Work smart, self-educate,
and act with integrity.

ENERGY

Musicians! Stop judging yourself and others so harshly! Stop being intimidated by others that seem to be more successful than you! It's all just an illusion. Success is whatever you define it to be. Are you a musician who is able to play music with your heart and soul? Are you a musician who has had a few paying gigs in the past? Are you a musician who has been able to touch people's lives with your music? If you answered yes to any of those questions, then congratulations, you're a successful musician!

As humans, we are wired to fend for ourselves. It's a part of the law of natural selection. At the same time, we are also wired to be contributing members of a tribe. This tribe is a community of like-minded individuals who will fight to defend the honor of our beliefs. This group of synergistic people is also meant to help one another in our individual endeavors. After all, if it brings glory to one of us, then it's good for the tribe. Energy, whether good or bad, is felt. Its presence cannot be hidden nor denied. We have all experienced this in our lives. Walk into any room with the intention of pissing people off or bringing them down, you will succeed. That energy will spread like wildfire. Walk into the same room with the intent of emanating gratitude, that sentiment will permeate those around you!

As I was relocating from Nashville to Los Angeles, I played a gig at the Long Beach Jazz Festival. In the greenroom before the show, a good friend of mine was introducing me to a bunch of his buddies in the scene. I'll never forget shaking hands with this one guitar player that night. I mentioned that I was soon moving to Los Angeles and he replied, "Great, that's all we need, another guitar player in LA." What was this incredible disdain I was met with? Is it really that bad out here for musicians? Are they struggling that hard to piece together a living? He kind of laughed it off with a shrug, but deep down I knew there was some sincerity to his statement. The point I'm making here is that if you don't have thick skin and confidence in yourself as a person and your musical abilities, it will be very difficult to rise above the negative energy that is so often displayed in our business. After talking with different musicians that night who were actually encouraging and willing to help me get established, I realized this truth: Energy, just like attitude, is a little thing that makes a HUGE difference.

TALENT

Many are able, but few are chosen. We weren't given the gift of music to just sit on it. In other words, we must serve society in a practical way that *does* make a difference in the world. When giving listeners an escape from their everyday lives, we provide a spiritual service. This is

why we're blessed with musical talent. The gift of music is like the mighty hammer of Thor. Only the honorable and the worthy can wield it. Music is one of the most important means of communication that can pierce any barrier. Demographic, psychographic, geographic, and behavioral boundaries can all be demolished by a few rhythmic pulses and a beautiful melody. This is a powerful kind of talent we are talking about here! However, take caution. DO NOT get so enthralled with yourself that you forget that everyone has some sort of talent; whether hidden deep inside, or glowing bright on the surface. What will you do with your talent? That is what matters most. Don't get it twisted; your talent is NOT your identity. Your talent is merely the vehicle that you use to breathe fulfillment into your life and into the lives of others. Talent itself is not the be-all-end-all. Sometimes as musicians, we tend to think that our only purpose is to be musicians and that our identity is our musical prowess. That's only one aspect of who we are. Music is what we do, not who we are. Which is why the concept of talent as it pertains to *ETHOS* goes hand-in-hand with humility.

HUMILITY

The word "humility" derives from the Latin word "humus" meaning "earth." To have humility means to be grounded. Have you ever heard someone say "that

person is down to earth?” Humility shouldn't be viewed as a weakness or sign of insecurity; it's actually quite the opposite. Humility is a desirable trait that helps you make great impressions and sound decisions. It shows that you are truly confident. That's right, confidence and humility work together in a positive way. Remember this, the stage you perform on took a team of talented people to construct; as well as the building you are in, the studios in which you record, and the instruments you play. No one person is capable of being all things to all of humanity with an endless supply of talent. If talented people work with other talented people, then greatness can and will be achieved. If all parties have an ample supply of humility, they will achieve greatness as a team. By remaining humble, you are spreading your reputation of reliability, professionalism, responsibility, and being a joy to work with; which in turn, will afford you more opportunities. You must admit to your areas of weakness, listen to others with an open mind, and work at this philosophy without the assumption that you have arrived. Try using humility as a currency to afford yourself future opportunities. The more you gain, the less you'll feel the need to flaunt.

In a scenario where you have landed a big gig for a major label artist, please remember that “you're not a rock star, you just work for one.” My good buddy, Dmitry

Gorodetsky (bassist for Charlie Puth), says this on his episode of The Career Musician Podcast (Season 3, Episode 48). It's easy to forget that you're not the star, but rather, you are a supporting role. If the main artist seeks your support downstage and wants you to go HAM, then by all means, go for it! But once the spotlight returns to the artist, it's time to get back to your stage mark and re-assimilate as a member of the band. In just about every show I've done, I've been asked to come down-stage for a guitar solo. Big surprise! After I do my part, I always go back to my little area of the stage and stay there unless I'm asked to come down again.



NOMAD and Dmitry Gorodetsky



NOMAD Hypes a Huge Crowd

TCM PRO TIP

Stage marks known as **spikes**, are imperative for any stage production. These marks are used to identify the location of different pieces of gear and musicians on deck (stage-floor). Spiking the stage is usually done with bright neon colors of yellow, green, orange or pink gaff tape (aka gaffers tape), in the shape of a small X or L. Upstage is closer to where the backline gear is (drums, amps, etc.) and the downstage is toward the audience; closer to the front of the stage where the monitor wedges (stage speakers) are located. Additionally, **Stage Left** and **Stage Right**, are from the perspective of the performer standing on stage looking at the audience, not the perspective of the audience member looking at the stage.

Your off-stage behavior is equally important. When you sign on with an artist, you are agreeing to represent them even if they're not around. When you're just chilling backstage, walking around the airport, hotel or venue, people will potentially recognize you. If you're acting the fool, being obnoxious, profane, or exuding any other type of negative behavior, people will notice. If you're cool, calm, and collected, then people will respond to you favorably. If you need a reminder to keep yourself humble, just take a look at the marquee out in front of the venue. Is your name on the sign?

Even if it is, that's all the more reason to remain humble as you'll be representing *yourself!*

OBJECTIVITY

Objectivity is defined as the ability to be uninfluenced by emotions or personal opinions. It's having the capacity to assess situations and draw sound conclusions, so watch what you say! What you say and how you say it will always have an effect. As musicians, we spend countless amounts of time developing a good tone on our instruments. We should take the same meticulous care with our communication skills, practicing diplomacy with every word we utter. Being a Cuban-Italian New Yorker, I've had to tone down my speech and learn to filter my thoughts before speaking. There were times I could've been fired from a gig for what I said, how I said it and to whom I said it. My delivery was poorly executed and emotionally charged without remaining objective.

Objectivity as a character trait will be one of the best assets you possess in relation to your success. It allows you to step back and remove yourself from the work, viewing the work as a separate organism that is not attached to you. Not reacting to people's opinions or comments frees you up from any future liability that could be detrimental to your reputation. I'm not saying that we shouldn't allow ourselves to feel, however,

when conducting business in a niche market such as the music industry, word travels fast. Learn to accept feedback even when you don't want to hear it. It won't affect the work you have already done and it'll keep your skills sharpened for future work.

When you're hashing it out with your band mates, it's common to flail away at one another about your creative differences. Once you start dealing with producers, managers, label execs, etc., you need to make sure you have a clear understanding of how to use your words most effectively. Don't let your creative juices pour out a barrage of emotions at the wrong time or in front of the wrong people. Repeat this mantra: "I vow to respond calmly instead of reacting hastily." The key is to respond instead of react. If you're feeling overwhelmed with pent up emotions, try to remember this: If you think everyone around you is being an ass, then most likely, you're the hole! Truth be told, we've all been the negative energy culprit at some point in our lives. The good news is that you have the opportunity each and every day to be different. If you can remain objective at all times, you'll be set for some smooth sailing!

Confession time...I've walked away from or have been let go from some of the biggest gigs. I was fired as a guitarist with a famed Gospel singer for using profanity.

I wasn't invited back to work with a premier music director on The American Music Awards because he said that I wasn't playing loud enough! (I know right, imagine that!?) I voluntarily walked away from an extremely lucrative world tour because of personal issues at home. I did one, and only one, movie score with an incredibly famous film composer because I didn't have the exact gear they requested. Rather than seeing these situations as pure failures, I saw them as reasons to get better at what I do. A chance for growth through deeper self reflection. Throughout my career, I have painstakingly learned the proper way to conduct myself and respond calmly without reacting hastily.

SAVVY

Savvy is defined as the ability to have common sense, good judgment, practical knowledge and shrewdness. Being savvy or shrewd is often misconstrued as being a hard-ass. Don't buy into that. If it wasn't for all the savvy managers out there, the legendary musical icons we all know and love wouldn't exist. In some ways, it's more important to make the right decisions for your career than it is to be a great musician. Most musicians don't have the luxury of being represented by a manager, so the responsibility is self reliant. Bringing the right energy to a situation, harnessing your talents, remaining humble and objective while making savvy business

moves can be a tall order! Here's the good news, I've gone through the gauntlet so that you don't have to. I've crawled, so you can run.

ETHOS | THE CAREER MUSICIAN'S CODE

As a Career Musician, I vow to embody positive **ENERGY**, unique **TALENT**, honest **HUMILITY**, clear **OBJECTIVITY**, and business **SAVVY** in all that I do.



FOR MORE, SEE:

**Worksheet #1: Define Your
ETHOS attributes**

In ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook

Chapter 2

Greatness Is A Decision

If You Want It, Go And Get It

It all starts with a decision, a decision to be great. The desire to become technically proficient and soulfully connected to the music and your instrument of choice, has been the primary focus up until now. If you're anything like me, no one taught you exactly how to start a career in music, it just sort of happens naturally. As a pre-teen, the music bug bit me when I saw Eddie Van Halen on MTV (back when MTV was the leading name in music television). He was playing, laughing, and living his best life! Deep down, I wanted that for myself too. As I continued my private guitar studies and learned more about music in general, I knew for sure that this would be my calling in life. I vowed to be the best musician I could be, so that I could make a living doing it. For me, this decision fell into place organically. For those who have a divine calling to be a musician, it's impossible to love anything else as deeply and wholeheartedly as music. You couldn't pry me away from those six strings! Day or night, anytime, any place, I could be found in the

same spot practicing my guitar. I continued practicing perpetually for many years.

“Wanna go to the mall and hang out?” My friends would ask. My answer was always “Nope, I gotta practice today.” They replied “Yeah man, but it’s Saturday.” My usual response to that was, “I know, that’s why it’s super important to get in at least eight hours without interruption. Bye! See ya Monday at school.” Sports, girls, family outings, adventures; none of these interested me. I was struck by the muse with an insatiable desire to discover music to the fullest.



NOMAD Circa 1995



NOMAD Circa 2006

My personal motto is the same now as it was then: Career Musician for life! I am what pros refer to as a “lifer.” If you’re reading this book, there’s a good chance that you are also a lifer. Once we commit ourselves resolutely to fulfill our dreams, we must go forth and conquer—oh, and fail too. That’s the unsexy truth people don’t tell you about “making it” in entertainment. You will fail from time to time. You must! Growth does not happen in your comfort zone; growth happens under pressure. Remember, immense pressure is what creates diamonds.

TCM PRO TIP

Get up, dress up, and show up! There’s no time like the present to pursue your dreams. Waiting for motivation to strike is only going to prolong the pursuit. Disciplined action is a surefire way to move you closer toward your goals.

As career musicians, we must wear multiple hats, master an array of genres, and play to the best of our ability for every occasion, sans excuses. Despite being sleep deprived, famished, hungover, or allergic to cats, the show must go on! Don’t assume that because you’ve landed the “big gig” that you’ve arrived. The common mistake made by many young career musicians is they tend to get ahead of themselves and think:

- a. They're better than their friends who haven't made it as far as they have, yet.
- b. This is their big break which is going to bring them fame and fortune.
- c. This will last forever and they'll always be working at full capacity.

These are dangerous thoughts. When you were young, did you ever have the delusional thought that you were the best that existed on your instrument? Then suddenly, another kid came along and played better than you. It humbled your a**, didn't it? It's one thing to be the best musician in your neighborhood or school, but it's another thing to be a pro in the real world, playing real gigs. Don't let your inner-child detour you from moving forward with your dreams. Keep working! There's no room for excuses. It doesn't matter what style of music you play, where you're from, or who you are. The only thing that matters is that you show up, do your job, and treat everyone with respect.

Your musical abilities alone are not enough to sustain your career. You must treat all aspects of your career with the same discipline and sacrifice that it took to get your playing chops up to this point. Practicing your scales is no longer applicable for the next phase of your growth. It's time to expand your expertise

into the business world. The ETHOS Pillars in action here are **Objectivity**, **Humility**, and **Savvy**. I'm always looking for ways to improve myself. I keep my notes and thoughts organized so they can actually serve me. I highly encourage you to journal and archive your business plans and goals. It's important to document your victories and lessons learned along the way. It will allow you to see how far you have come, how much you have grown, and how much there is left to do.

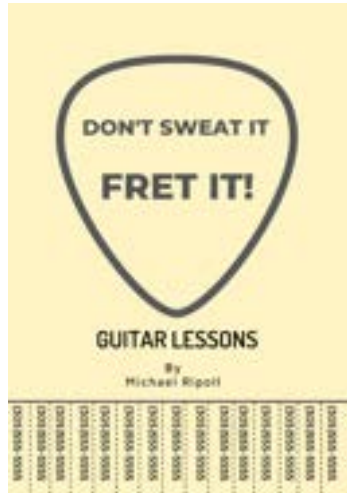
The Various Paths Of A Career Musician

There are many ways to make money as a musician. Let's take a look at a few options you can pursue.

TEACHER

If you're a really good instrumentalist or vocalist, one of the best ways to get going early on is to teach others. When I was around the age of fifteen, I started teaching the other guitarist in my first rock band. I was simultaneously learning as I was teaching. Shout out to Steve Preziosi AKA "Prez," who was teaching me on guitar at the time! Being both the student and the mentor really helped me develop my teaching chops. Realizing I had a natural propensity for it, I started teaching others. The income I earned from this venture carried me

through the earliest stages of my career. At that time, there was no internet or social media. I marketed myself the old-fashioned way, by word-of-mouth. Honestly, even with the help of social media today, word-of-mouth is still the best way to cultivate loyal customers. If someone validates you with their verbal testimonial, others are more likely to be convinced and follow suit.



*Nomad's Original Guitar Lessons
Flyer Back In The 90's*

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GIGS

Once I had a sizable group of students, I started to hit my local gig scene. There were plenty of jazz and blues clubs around the Ft. Lauderdale/Miami area. I was soaking it all in. It wasn't long before all the networking and hanging out converted into gigs. Get yourself out there! Frequent your local live music venues and don't be afraid to ask if you can sit in and play a few tunes. This is the single best way to spread the word about your playing or singing abilities. Eventually, it'll start to pay off and you'll develop a buzz around town. Before long, you'll find yourself hooked up with a few acts that keep your calendar full. Regional gigs are another great

source of income while gaining experience with some light travel. Typically within a 100 mile radius or so of your hometown, these gigs often pay a little more than the local ones. Jumping in a van and hitting the road with other like-minded musicians is an excellent way to develop your pre-touring skills.

TOURING MUSICIAN AND MUSIC DIRECTOR

Touring domestically or internationally is amazing. Not only do you get to see the world simultaneously while doing what you love, you also get paid to do it! Typically larger tours are put together in music towns like Nashville or Los Angeles. Getting an opportunity to audition for these positions is a little more difficult than getting a local or regional gig. It requires strong relationships and a solid reputation. I'll cover more about the audition process in the next chapter. The music director, which is another term for band leader, is the coveted position on tours and other productions. As the MD you are the leader of all things as it relates to the band and music. This role requires a strong display of all ETHOS pillars to be operating at the highest level.

SESSION WORK

Much like the touring scene, studio work happens the more you interact with other pro musicians on a consistent basis. By word-of-mouth, your name will keep coming up in conversation and soon enough you'll be

invited to play on a track for somebody. Additionally, there's session work you can do when recording your own material, or remote session work for others, which is also another great way to monetize your studio skills. In this realm, your home studio rig should be set up permanently to ensure you're always ready to hit that record button and potentially make some money! Likewise if you're a touring musician, having a mobile recording rig will serve you well.

PRODUCER

In line with studio work, producing can be especially lucrative; even if you're producing independently. Artists everywhere are always looking for skilled musicians who know how to record and produce. Start small by offering to produce a few tracks for a fellow artist and don't be afraid to contribute to the songwriting. Some of the best songs ever recorded have been written by a room full of musicians, singers, and producers all collaborating.

SONGWRITER

Songwriting can prove to be a lucrative career path all its own. I've known many songwriters over the course of my career who have been extremely successful in getting songs placed, both with major label recording artists and for sync licensing opportunities. If you know that you're a crafty "lyrical gangsta", then by all means

go for it! The ability to create memorable melodies combined with exceptional top-line abilities is a win-win combination. If you do pursue this as your sole source of income, or at least one of your main sources, then I would highly recommend learning an instrument such as piano or guitar so you can write without having to depend on other musicians to record your song demos.

COMPOSER

Most musicians are composers by nature. Think about it. How many times have you come up with a riff or musical theme that ends up becoming a complete song or composition? You're a composer and didn't even know it! Lean into this skill and develop it by studying, arranging, and orchestrating. All of these skills work together in tandem. Once you build a body of work for yourself, there are multiple ways that you can monetize it.

TCM PRO TIP

Even if you don't plan on becoming a film composer, it's a good idea to have some basic knowledge of arranging and orchestrating. These skills are especially important when producing. Having the ability to write arrangements in musical notation as well, can prove to be extremely useful as a stand alone service.

ARTIST

Being an artist requires time, money and a whole lot of determination. As musicians we are all artists and your artistry should not go neglected. Whether you are a solo act or a member of a band, finding time in your schedule to cultivate your own music can be difficult when trying to pay the bills. As mentioned earlier, art and commerce don't necessarily mix unless you find a way to subsidize your artistry by working with other musical acts who have already scaled.

Each of these possible paths of a career musician is dependent on your life situation and where you are in your trajectory. Teaching is an excellent way to get started as you build up to better and better gigs. If you're a travel geek and want to get out and see the world, then clearly touring is the perfect career path for you. If you have a family and would prefer to be home, then session work may really interest you. With professional recording gear being more affordable than ever, you can create a killer home studio that enables you to work remotely. And even without recording gear, all it takes is you and your instrument to start composing, producing, and songwriting.

I will say from my own personal experience that attempting to pursue all of them at the start is not the

best idea. Spreading yourself too thin is a real thing that could potentially hinder your growth all together. My recommendation is to start with one or two areas of interest in which your strengths lie. There will be plenty of opportunities as your career progresses to branch out and diversify even more. By taking the time to narrow your focus and hone your skills on a few of these areas, you'll develop a knack for them and start to build a buzz. Just like with playing gigs or anything else, upon discovering your strong suits and cultivating them, you'll be crushing the game in no time! More importantly, you'll develop an identifiable sound and sonic quality. There's nothing wrong with finding a niche and sticking to it. This is how some of the best artists, composers, writers, producers, and more have built amazing careers for themselves.



FOR MORE, SEE:

Worksheet #2: Identify Your Strengths and Choose Your Career Path

In ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook

Diversify Or Die

Once you've discovered your musical strengths, it's time to leverage them to your advantage. Multiple income streams will be the most important factor of earning a sustainable living. The concept of developing multiple income streams is nothing new. It's a tried-and-true method that has greatly benefitted me throughout the course of my career. For example, as a guitarist, I double on a plethora of other stringed and fretted instruments (a few non-fretted as well like the oud and fretless bass). It has enabled me to earn more money by playing a handful of these instruments on a track or a gig. I've done sessions where I've played acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass, 12-string guitar, ukulele, banjo, dobro, lap steel, and more all on just one song! You can best believe that the producer continued to call me back over the years. Are you a killer sax player? Then don't be afraid to work up the necessary chops to play baritone, tenor, alto, soprano, and other types of saxes! Flute and clarinet are also examples of the chops required to cross the line from hobbyist to career woodwindist. Are you a killer producer? Then don't stop there. Learn how to properly engineer a recording. While you're at it, learn to mix and master as well. Whatever it is that you do, as long as you earn money in a multitude of ways on a consistent basis, you'll be a successful career musician.

TCM PRO TIP

Experiment with different genres before you start playing professionally. This way, you'll discover which styles you enjoy and are most comfortable playing. Make notes of the commonalities those genres may have. Doing this will make those genres easier to learn. For example: Have you ever noticed how jazz harmony is applied in gospel and R&B? Or think about how country and rock are extremely similar in song form, rhythm tracks, and velocity. This is especially important if you want to be a session musician.



NOMAD and John Powell



NOMAD and Tommy Sims



NOMAD and Walter Afanasieff



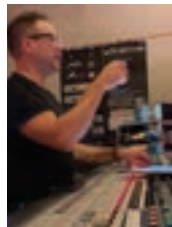
NOMAD in Studio



NOMAD Producing at Steakhouse Studios in LA



NOMAD with Tommy Sims, Travis Tritt and Sam Mooreay at Smoakstack Studios in Nashville



NOMAD Producing at Steakhouse Studios in LA

While it's extremely important to be as versatile as possible, it's impossible to be everything to everyone. "Jack of all trades, master of some," as John Powell told me while in a recording session at his studio for the movie *Ferdinand*. You can listen to John talking about this on episode 5 of *The Career Musician Podcast*. Think of it like this: you can do a little bit of a lot of things, and be really good at a few of them, but not everything. When I moved to Nashville in 1997, I knew that I was going into a densely populated country-chicken-pickin' guitar town. As I prepared for the big move, I started working on my country chops, but soon realized, while it was fun to learn some new licks, it wasn't my passion. Once I got there and started mingling in the scene, I was astounded at how fiercely good other guitarists were in this style! It definitely caused me to reassess my objective and plan of attack. Within my identity as a studio player, I found that I excelled in rock, funk, soul, R&B, and Latin. So that's where I focused my energy. Once I became known in the Nashville session scene as the guy that could crush these genres, I started to thrive. I found my groove! I was well-diversified, yet focused on the things at which I excelled in the most. I found my niche, carved out a little nook, and propelled forward with my strengths leading the way. This led me to play on some of the coolest sessions I can remember during my Nashville residency!

I ended up working with famed CCM producers Brown Banister, Bernie Herms, Mark Heimmerman, Mark Hammond, Keith Thomas, Todd Collins, Cedric & Victor Caldwell, Tommy Sims, Dan Muckala, Shaun Schenkel, and so on. I also got to play on albums for artists like Natalie Grant, CeCe Winans, BeBe Winans, Vicki Winans, Jaci Valasquez, Sam Moore, Anthony Evans, Jody Mc Brayer, Kim Burrell, Kelley Price, Janna and Greg Long, Avalon, Mandisa, Kirk Franklin, Michelle Williams (Destiny's Child), Smokie Norful, Yolanda Adams, Kurt Carr, Kirk Whalum, Nicole Mullen and more. I even co-wrote songs with artists like Toby Mac (of DC Talk), Out Of Eden, Jump5, KJ-52, etc. These times were some of the best times of my career! I wasn't only living the dream of working as a full-time musician, but I was doing work that I thoroughly enjoyed!

My point is that the work will come if you keep your head down, nose clean, and hand to the plow. In my experience, it's only when I try to be all things to all people, that it tends to backfire. Find your general niche, then be diversified within it. Lean into that 100%! Do your thing! This is how you'll remain a member of the call-back band.



FOR MORE, SEE:

**Worksheet #3: How Diverse
Are Your Skill Sets?**

In ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook

The Power Of Knowing Your Why

By 2005, I built up a hefty roster of colleagues based in Los Angeles that eventually led me to playing the American Idols Live tour with Carrie Underwood. Without having to audition, I got the gig through all the consistent networking I did while I was on the road with artist Kirk Whalum. After a very successful run I was asked to return. Upon considering, I concluded that the pay bump simply wasn't enough for me to leave town again for such an extended period of time. Now this is not a light hearted decision based on money. In fact it was a difficult one to make, however I had just moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in film and TV music. Had I taken this tour, the majority of my time would have been spent on the road instead of in the studio pursuing my original intentions. So in 2006, I declined the coveted tour.



NOMAD at American Idol Live Tour, 2005



NOMAD On Stage at Austin City limits



NOMAD On Stage in Las Vegas



*NOMAD on Stage
at Austin city limits*

Soon after turning down the big tour, I was able to get work with some other artists which subsidized my income in between recording sessions. These artists had me booked for more convenient gigs, fly dates, and mini tours. I found myself in a situation where I was able to do both; light road work on the weekends and studio work during the week. However, I felt that this was less than ideal. There would be times when I was on the road and I would receive a call for a major film session for which I had no choice but to decline the work. I'm going to be honest with you, that hurt me deeply. It was great to be on a string of fly dates making money, but

the dreaded FOMO (fear of missing out) definitely set in when a mega-hit producer such as Randy Jackson or composer virtuoso John Powell would call for work and I couldn't make it. There were a few times where I got lucky because the producer or composer was flexible and I was able to record remotely with my mobile rig. But that's the exception and not the rule when you're dealing with such high-end productions. This situation had me contemplating as to *why* I was even doing tour work in the first place as my main goal was to be doing film and TV sessions.

It's important to keep in mind *why* you are pursuing a career in music. Everyone's *why* is different. But whatever your reason is, always keep it at the forefront of your mind when considering any job. If you get an offer to work on a cruise ship for a nine-month contract or go on tour with a major-label artist, ask yourself these important questions: "Why should I (or shouldn't I) take this gig? How will this benefit me? Is this in line with my goals?" If time allows, really mull it over and sleep on it before giving an answer. Talk it over with a loved one. Due diligence is an integral part of making an informed decision based on the foundation of your *why*. This is how you're going to avoid putting yourself in compromising positions.

Asking yourself why you should or shouldn't take a gig will present deeper questions like, "Is it the right time in my life to go on an extended tour? Would I be leaving my family or other responsibilities behind for too long? Will this gig help or hinder my career? Will I have money left over afterwards to pay the bills?" I've had friends who left their family for extended periods of time so that they could come back with enough money to buy a home in cash! I've also had friends come back with not much more than what they left with. The gig may or may not be worth it. It all depends on your situation and initial reasons for why you're pursuing this type of work.

Gigs can come in the form of a last-minute emergency (i.e. a musician suddenly pulled out of a gig and you are the first person to be called to fill in). In these cases, the caller might need an answer immediately. Even so, you can still ask for a few moments to think it over. Make sure to confirm a specific time that you will get back to them and be certain to have a solid yes or no answer in that time frame. Here's how I typically respond when I need time to consider a gig: "I really appreciate this offer and would love to do the gig! I just have to double check my calendar and get clarification on a few other pending jobs. Once I find this out, I'll call back with a definite answer." More times than not, the client will be willing to work with you on this.

Now let's examine the possibilities of why you might say "No thank you." Perhaps you and your partner are expecting a child. This was definitely the case for me back in 2008 when I turned down the New Kids On The Block tour. Sometimes road work comes at just the right time to help keep the lights on, but other times it may be an obstacle in the pursuit of your main goals. Whatever the reasons you may have for saying "No", just be sure they are well thought out. Write your vision and define your why, this will provide clarity. As the Roman philosopher Seneca said, "The definition of luck is when preparedness meets opportunity." So do your best to always be prepared for whatever comes your way!



FOR MORE, SEE:

**Worksheet #4:
Defining Your *Why***

In ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook

How To Secure Your Spot In The Industry

The Fine Art Of Auditioning

Every appearance you make is an audition. You are always being watched and evaluated. Your demeanor, as well as your actions, can greatly affect your chances at landing the next gig. Don't lose the gig before you've even had it! Word-of-mouth referrals are powerful. I like to think of it as word-of-many-mouths meaning that everyone you encounter talks to each other. The music industry is a tangled web of connections. If you're always making a good impression, your reputation will precede you and you'll get the calls you want. Repeat business has been the crux of a sustainable living during my thirty-year career. When you establish a good rapport with a prospective client, it will secure your place in their world. After all, we go with what we know works, right?

At some point, you will be faced with a real bonafide audition; nerve-racking, I know. Here's my trick for

getting rid of those pesky butterflies. Book something on your calendar immediately following the audition. An event that you look forward to, unrelated to the audition, and fun. Use this as a distraction to curb any anxiety you might experience. For example, when I auditioned for Babyface, I booked a recording session to record some of my own music right after the audition. This gave me something to look forward to and it distracted me from the fact that I was just about to audition for one of the most legendary songwriters of all time. I use this trick continuously and it works wonders for my nerves. (Spoiler Alert: I got the gig with Babyface! After a few years as the guitarist in his band and quite a bit of session work with him, I grew into the role of music director for the next decade. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Back to the audition process.)

There are different types of auditions, let's take a look at what to expect from each.

AUDITION TYPE 1: THE LOCAL GIG

Most musicians begin with their local music scene. This requires identifying local venues and finding out who books the bands. Luckily, most of the preliminary work can be done online. With a quick search, it's easy to find out who does what and where to send your music.

In the early '90s while I was living in South Florida—fresh out of high school—I saw a newspaper ad for a local funk band audition. I was so nervous, this was in the very early stages of my career. I practiced for days on end until I learned every note of the classic cover songs they asked for. The drummer, Kevin Jonas, took notice of this and saw something in me that he identified with. He became a fan, which gave me the confidence I needed to get through the audition. He took me under his wing and showed me the ropes. To this day Kevin and I are good friends. When you're prepared, the nerves have a tendency to dissipate allowing you to showcase your talent.

AUDITION TYPE 2: THE LABEL ARTIST

This type of audition can be invite-only, or a small cattle call. Typically you'll be asked to prepare some music ahead of time from the artist's catalog. The goal is to commit these songs to memory. It's crucial that you do your homework and crush it! There is no margin for error, excuses, issues, drama, or anything else that gets in the way of nailing this audition. Don't just get these songs under your fingers, get them under your skin! Go through the tracks with a fine-tooth comb and learn your part exactly as it is on the record. Make your own charts, and listen to these tunes non-stop, on loop, all

the way leading up to the audition. This will ensure you internalize the music.

TCM PRO TIP

Make a playlist of the artist's catalog on your preferred streaming service. Also rip some mp3s of the tunes and store them both in the cloud and directly to your devices. This way you'll always have the music ready to reference. Create a folder that can be accessed from all of your devices (offline). Keeping all setlists, charts, mp3s, and links in specific folders will keep you organized and always ready to go.

But don't stop there! If you really want the gig, go the extra mile and commit to memory a few more of the artist's biggest hits. You'll have the leg up above the other auditioning musicians if you learn the artist's entire catalog. This kind of initiative is exactly what they are looking for. As long as you remain humble and chill, the artist and music director will definitely take notice. The audition isn't just about how well you play, it's about whether or not you are a good employee. After all, this is a job.

AUDITION TYPE 3: THE BIG CATTLE CALL

These high profile auditions are typically for looking

for fresh talent. I'm talking about lights, cameras, pyro, dancers, and a staff of at least a hundred people or more. Why is it referred to as a cattle call? It's because you'll be waiting in a long line of other auditioning musicians, rounded up like a bunch of nameless cattle. Most times, this line will wrap around the studio building! The name of the game for these types of auditions is play it cool. Don't over-share or over-extend yourself. Keep your cards close to your chest, but don't be so closed off that you get mistaken for arrogant or standoffish. Also, don't be so nervous that you shake in your boots. People can sense that right away and it will cause upper management to lose confidence in you. You gotta be in the sweet spot. It's a combination of being badass, chill, and passionate.

Because of my time on the American Idols Live tour, I was on the repeat-call-list for many of these cattle calls. It was great to know that my name kept popping up in this circuit of the industry. There were a few major gigs that I got and some that I didn't. Regardless, I kept showing up, doing the work, and moving on to the next. One of my favorite auditions was for The Megan Mullally Show. I went through a series of mini-auditions conducted by the same music director I worked with at American Idol, Rickey Minor. All day long I was called to fill-in with different band members. The ability to get along

with different personalities and playing various styles really works in your favor in settings like these. If there are 20 musicians, you each get assigned a number for the chair you are auditioning for. Running the audition in this fashion, allows the MD to get a sense of how each player gelled with the other players. What I really enjoyed about this particular audition was that we had to play an array of musical genres. The musicians were informed ahead of time about the musical expectations so I made sure to bring the proper rig to cover each genre, complete with several different types of guitars. This impressed the music director greatly. It turns out that I was one, of only two, guitarists that did this! Yes, I got the gig if you're wondering. It was an amazing six month stint being on a TV set everyday from 9am to 6pm just like a real job; only with the benefit of playing music all day!



NOMAD and Rickey Minor

AUDITION TYPE 4: THE REFERRAL

This type of audition is solely based on pre-existing relationships. This is when a colleague vouches for you and brings you into their camp. In this scenario, you have pre-qualified for the initial vetting process and blew past all of the traditional protocols. In fact, you're not auditioning at all, you actually have the gig! Now it's on you to prove that you were the right choice. This kind of referral can be for performance gigs, studio sessions and other jobs like consulting, producing, or teaching. On one occasion David Foster's manager referred me for a private teaching gig that lasted well over two years! You just never know. Be open to the different types of opportunities that colleagues send your way.

TCM PRO TIP

If you're referred for a live gig and there's no time for rehearsals, written charts really come in handy. However, don't get so glued to the chart that you forget you're performing. Make PDF charts of each song and load them into an app like **iReal** or **ForScore** on an iPad or tablet and be sure to bring your own music stand or clip. Don't expect the production staff or venue to have anything you need. Being self-sufficient is the true sign of a Career Musician.

A studio session referral is never a ceremonial event like the live performance auditions. They're much more subtle and casual. They rely more on vetting and "personality-scanning" to be sure you are competent and trustworthy. It's all about creative chemistry, aka **Energy**—*ETHOS* Pillar #1. Studio gigs are supposed to be a chill, safe space. Observe how others behave towards the producer and artist. Take note and do your best to fit in without being anxious, needy, or demanding in any way. If you can do this, in addition to bringing the right tools for the job, you'll get that repeat business! Whether you get referred for a live show, studio session, or any other type of gig, ALWAYS bring your A-Game.



NOMAD and Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds



NOMAD's Studio Energy



FOR MORE, SEE:

**Worksheet #5: Current and Dream
Audition List**

Worksheet #6: Pre-Audition Checklist

**Worksheet #7: Booked Audition
Checklist**

Worksheet #8: Post-Audition Checklist

In **ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook**

Your Value Is Not Determined By The Gig

We tend to place value on ourselves according to the gig we have at the current moment. Let me tell you right now, the gig does not define you! Gigs will come and go. Your purpose in life is greater than any gig. Your value is determined by you and you alone.

Here's a scenario to help solidify this concept for you: Musician-A has four gigs with two big artists. It just so happens that each artist's touring schedules have not clashed. Musician-A is flying high with their success. On the other hand, Musician-B has a local church gig and does sporadic session work whenever the call comes in. Who's the better musician? Who's more successful? Let's suppose that while Musician-A is on a glamorous world tour, Musician B gets called for a session in town and ends up co-writing a viral hit with a high-end producer and artist. Now Musician-B is earning royalties, buying a home for their family and one for their sweet little ol' mom too! Who's more successful now? The answer is none of these musicians are any more successful than the other. Music is not a competition. This is a career. You can't possibly foresee the future, so don't devalue yourself because every gig is a stepping stone to the next.

Persevere even when things look dismal. It may seem like everyone else is getting the coveted gigs except you. Do not let this temporary external situation dictate your internal self-worth. Know that you are being molded for something great. Sometimes there's a reason why things happen the way they do. Don't sit around wasting time trying to figure it out. Instead, pursue other projects that will fulfill your creative thirst. What matters is what you do to pursue your dreams when the phone isn't ringing. Your proactiveness will be rewarded when you least expect it.

Reputation As Representation

Whenever you step foot on stage or in the studio, you should always perform at your best; whether it's Madison Square Garden, Capitol Records, or Bob's Pub down the street. You never know who will be in the crowd. I've done gigs in hole-in-the-wall places where I was approached by a celebrity producer or label executive afterward. On the flip side, I've also played the O2 Arena where no one spoke to me at all after the gig. You just don't know who's watching, listening, or thinking about asking for your information. In fact, they might not even approach you at the moment. They might just shoot you a DM on socials or look you up online to see if you have management they can reach out to. That's how I got the

gig with Leslie Odom Jr. He found me on Twitter to hire me for a session. Always check your emails, texts, and DMs. Even check your junk and spam messages.

Leslie was a special case in which the artist sought me out himself. Usually, the managers do that. Managers are the first line of communication between you and the artist. Managers insulate the artist from matters pertaining to business, finances, scheduling, and the backing band. It's extremely important that you treat management with the utmost respect and professional courtesy; even if they don't reciprocate. A good approach for dealing with managers is to make friends with them. Find out what's important to them. What makes them tick? Do they have any hobbies or mutual interests that you share? Establishing a solid rapport with the management team is a good idea. It will give you a leg up when things go ar;y; and trust me, they will. When life happens and the proverbial sh*t hits the fan, it'll be a huge advantage to have a strong relationship with management. They'll take care of you!

From Aretha Franklin, Barbra Streisand, Babyface, Celine Dion, to Sting, Beyoncé, Jewel, Justin Bieber, and many more; for each of these artists, I was referred by another career musician, a producer, or their management because they already knew my work,

liked my work, and trusted me to keep my mouth shut while I did the work.



*NOMAD and Donny Osmond
in Atlantic City*



NOMAD and Jennifer Hudson



NOMAD and Kat Graham



NOMAD and Quincy Jones



NOMAD and Jewel at The Grove, 2006



*NOMAD with Kenny "Babyface"
Edmonds, L.A. Reid and Daryl Simmons
at Hollywood Walk of Fame*

The Customer Is Always Right

Who's the customer? It's the producer, artist, music director, or manager who hired you. Give them what they want and you'll continue to be invited back to their sessions. Check out this example of a studio session scenario that I've experienced before:

Nomad: "I have a cool idea for the intro of this song, would you like to hear it?"

Producer: "Sure, man, let's give it a shot!"
(Nomad plays the part)

Producer: "Cool man, thanks."

Now what am I supposed to say? The answer is nothing! In these situations, you have to leave it right where they left it. If the producer likes your contribution, they may tell you or they may not. You don't know how busy they are or what they are dealing with. They might be so inundated with work that they just need to get you tracked and out the door as quickly as possible. Perhaps they didn't like what you did at all but they didn't want to hurt your feelings. It's best to leave it alone and move on. Now here's a scenario where that same conversation goes differently:

Nomad: "I have a cool idea for the intro of this song,

would you like to hear it?"

Producer: "Sure, man, let's give it a shot! Hold on a sec..."
(Talking ensues behind the glass. Nomad can't hear what's being said)

Producer: "Ok man, let's try your idea, but do it a step and a half down with another guitar tone. Maybe something that's less twangy or more texturally rich."

Nomad: "Absolutely! Are you thinking more of a nylon string vibe, or something still in the steel string acoustic world? Perhaps maybe with a deeper tone?"

Producer: "Hmmm, not really sure. Give me a few examples."

Nomad: "For sure! Let me grab a few guitars and tell me what you like. Of course I can also layer the different guitars to give you more depth while still having a few different tonal palettes in there."

In this scenario the producer and I are having a positive, synergistic conversation. I'm being super accommodating and the customer is happy.

TCM PRO TIP

Always, and I mean ALWAYS, bring every piece of gear that you might need for ALL sessions. The whole point of being a session musician is to help facilitate the vision of the producer and artist. This means the more stuff you can play and the more options you have to offer, the better! Versatility is the name of the game.

Stay On The Radar

In the age of smartphones and internet pollution, there is so much content being shoved down our throats at all times. It's normal and understandable to fall off someone's radar. It's up to you to stay in their purview. The old adage "out of sight out of mind" is most definitely true. It's best to remain being seen. The trick is to be persistent without being pushy. There's a fine line between the two.

It's a great idea to have a CRM (customer relationship management tool) as it will greatly increase your odds of getting the calls you want. A CRM is a comprehensive list of contacts with whom you've either done business with in the past or that you hope to do business with in the future. It's a database with all pertinent information—

name, contact email, phone number, date of last contact, and additional notes. Reviewing this document on a regular basis will help you keep up with everyone in your network. As an added bonus, this especially comes in handy when you're collecting money that's owed to you.

TCM PRO TIP

We all know that networking can be awkward and uncomfortable. But “no man is an island unto himself.” We are all connected. This is why we make music in the first place. It's to feel and share that connection. So get out of your comfort zone and go network. It's important to remember that networking is not about what connections you can make for your own benefit. It's about presenting yourself to be of service to others. Selfless relationships are the key to longevity in this business. The point is, you'll never know until you get up and go!

Part of staying on people's radar includes not being a ghost. “Ghosting” is the act of blatantly ignoring someone who is trying to reach you. It's beyond rude, it's disrespectful. How would you feel if you were ghosted when you inquired about your paycheck? Don't ignore

people. If someone is attempting to reach you, let them know you've received their attempt and will get back to them shortly. If you are not interested in their offer, thank them for their consideration and politely decline. If you have an issue with someone or you're dissatisfied with their work, attempt to resolve the issue peacefully and respectfully. It's okay to let someone know you aren't interested or there is a conflict in your schedule, just don't leave them hanging. It's important to maintain your integrity by being prompt and respectful in your correspondence.

I've seen good reputations be built and destroyed in a single day. It's of high-importance to communicate effectively and keep records of your communication. How's your follow-up game? Does it take you a few days or more to reply to emails? Does it take hours or days before you realize that you received a handful of important text messages that you haven't answered? If so—yikes!—that's not a good look. People forget things all the time and you don't want prospective clients to forget you. Your follow-up game is just as important as your outreach hustle. The truth of the matter is that we're all tethered to our phones pretty much 24/7. Respond immediately. This will show the other party that you're eager to get to work and that you're responsible with your scheduling and organizational skills.

TCM PRO TIP

Urgent matters will require your attention as soon as possible. Time is money and you don't want to be that person who's holding up the entire process. You also don't want to lose a gig due to your procrastination. Handling correspondence via phone calls, emails, texts, and DMs requires diplomacy and good time-management skills. Designate times throughout your day to address all of these needs and keep tabs on which are urgent and which are non-urgent so that you can prioritize accordingly.

Imagine you've been hired to do a remote session for an artist. The producer has sent you all of the files and details of the job. You get the job done quickly, you triple check your work for quality, and deliver a professionally written email with a download link to your files. You go out of your way to make it easy and convenient for them. Then... Crickets... Days go by and you hear nothing. Now what? You don't know what to think, right? It's extremely unsettling and many questions enter your mind: Did they receive the work? Did they like it? Did they forget about it? Maybe they hired someone else to replace you? Are they even going to pay you? Now you are left with your imagination running wild. Doesn't feel so good, right?

As a music director and producer, when I'm leading a group of musicians, I need to know that all parties received my messages ahead of time. I expect them to acknowledge receipt of those messages and agree to protocols. These messages typically include important information like call times for soundcheck, studio location, downbeat time, lobby or bus call, airport check-in, etc. It's extremely important that everyone responds even with a simple answer such as: "Yes, confirmed" or "Copy that!" I've been known to replace musicians on a moment's notice if they're not responding to my messages. Regardless if you're slammed against the wall with several projects on strict deadlines, follow up! Get back to your clients and say something—even if you can't respond with a detailed message. Let them know that you're aware of all of the instructions and that you will get the job done by the deadline required. No response is a powerful response and word travels fast in this business. Don't let a lack of communication ruin your chance for the next gig.

If your aspirations include being a producer, music director, or to hold any other type of leadership position, the ability to manage others is imperative. It is not enough to simply make the hiring calls and let the ship steer itself. As the person in charge, you must take control of the entire situation and manage all variables

including but not limited to: project deadlines, booking studios, scheduling, rehearsals, budgets, band staffing, copyist services, playback tech, and all other elements. Being the leader when everyone gets along is easy, but that's not a realistic expectation. The real challenge is balancing everyone's different needs, personalities, and egos to create a cohesive productive environment.

The bottom line is that you want to ensure that you get repeat call backs in every facet of the industry. You want to be invited on the next tour, be on the next session, produce an artist's next track, and compose for the next new film. Don't ever give a client an opportunity to say that you were disorganized, ill-prepared, or unreliable. Once those kinds of stigmas are attached to your name, it's extremely hard to get rid of them. Remember, since you most likely don't have a manager to represent you, your reputation will be your only form of representation. Your reputation is everything in this business. Believe it or not, it's a small industry and you are always being noticed; even when you think you are not. Keep a good word on the street about yourself by being extremely responsible and professional at all times. If you do this, you'll have no problem getting and keeping the work!

TCM PRO TIP

Today it is very common for someone to reach out via DMs but this is not the most proficient way to deliver details. Be sure to move these communications to an email stream. Doing so creates a digital paper trail for your records; which is a good insurance policy. Exemplifying your ability to exchange pleasantries and address all of the required tasks at hand demonstrates that your rates are justified.

Chapter 4

Make Music Your Business

The Business Of Running You

Business acumen is something that most musicians do not possess. If you double major in music and business management, you'll be ahead of the game in more aspects than one. If you didn't go to college or didn't take any business classes, that's okay. By implementing some basic tools, you can thrive in an industry that is known for its less than upright dealings. This is where *ETHOS* Pillar #5 comes in handy—*Savvy*.

Let's start with the business of running you. As a musician without a day job, you are free to do whatever the hell you want. If you want to work out, eat right and be healthy, you can. If you want to sleep in, eat junk food and play video games all day, you can do that too. With freedom comes great responsibility. In order to become a real *Career Musician*, it takes sacrifice and the correct mindset. What are your specific goals? What exactly do you hope to accomplish with your career in music? Most

importantly, what is your timeline? Without a timeline you are doomed. If you don't hold yourself accountable to deadlines, you may never reach your target. Your timeline doesn't need to be overwhelmingly elaborate, as we all know, life is what happens when we're busy making plans. You should however, at the very least, have a general outline that is straight to the point. Map it out for yourself because if you don't, who will? The ability to play your ass off (even at the most masterful level) does not equate to having a stable career. It's time to make the decision to take your career to the next level. Henry Ford said it best, "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right."

CYO: Chief You Officer

Musicians are entrepreneurs. By definition, an entrepreneur is a person who organizes and operates a business, taking on greater than normal financial risks in order to do so. If this isn't the life of a musician, I don't know what is! Imagine yourself as the CEO of your own mini-corporation. I call this position the CYO (Chief You Officer). As the CYO of your business you'll be modeling the C-Suite infrastructure of a corporation. This position carries the responsibilities of a few executive titles combined. Here's a breakdown of those roles:

COO (Operations): Runs the day-to-day operations of your company

CMO (Marketing): Develops and implements marketing strategies and PR

CFO (Finances): Responsible for all financial aspects of your company

CEO (President): Manages all of the above as a coherent team

As a one-person company, it can be a juggling act to keep every department running smoothly. This is where scheduling your day in modules will prove useful. Make it a point to only focus on one task at a time and you'll be much more efficient.

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

The next step in configuring your business infrastructure is to establish a standard operating procedure (SOP). When you apply an SOP to your business, you are instilling values and expectations for yourself and your clients. The life of a musician is not based on an eight-hour workday like the rest of society. We run on twelve to sixteen-hour days. Time management is crucial. Every second of every minute counts! You will lose that precious time if you don't implement some sort of daily

routine. After developing my own daily routine over the years, I have arrived at one big conclusion—less is more!

Here's how I do it: I partition my days into modules that are interchangeable. If something urgent comes up at the last minute, it's ok because I can shift these modules to accommodate. My days always begin and end with personal time like working out, meditating, or being with family. The other modules throughout the day are relegated to the various types of business I must tend to. Using modules allows for flexibility in your daily life. What matters most is that the work gets done on a consistent basis. Based on your top priorities, decide which tasks are urgent and non-urgent. You can always rearrange the modules as needed. The takeaway is that it's important for your mental health and your efficiency as a CYO to set aside time for your needs.

As a part of your SOP it's imperative to measure your progress. Take your trajectory into your own hands by writing down your goals, organizing your schedule, making lists, and managing your inventory. Measuring your progress is vital to success because it creates momentum. It's what separates the pros from the amateurs. Don't build your career on hope and guess work, build it on tried-and-true best-practices. When you analyze your achievements and failures objectively,

you'll be able to carve a clear path for yourself and pivot when you need to. Failure is not a deterrent, it's a chance to learn from your missteps and improve.



FOR MORE, SEE:

**Worksheet #9:
SOP Daily Planner**

In ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook

Establishing Your Company Infrastructure

Company Infrastructure consists of schedules, databases, invoices, contracts, and more to keep it all running smoothly. It's the internal engine that keeps your business in motion. Without a tidy and maintained infrastructure, it's impossible to keep track of anything. Here's four key components to my company infrastructure:

1. **Master Binder:** A multi-tab spreadsheet documenting all moving parts of your business and inventory of all digital IP (Intellectual Property) and assets such as: company contact info and links, CRM (customer relations management tool), resume, bio, credits, song releases, music catalog, account log-ins, equipment serial numbers, any other important information.
2. **Task Manager:** This is a spreadsheet which accounts for all of your "To Do" items. Whether the task is administrative, creative, or miscellaneous, each task must be done by the deadlines set.
3. **Content Organizer:** This should include any and all social media content, blogs, webinars, website info,

photos, videos, and anything that can be utilized to create more buzz about you and your brand. This should also include frequently used hashtags.

4. **Asset Deliverables Folders:** I use three cloud-based server platforms for all of my digital assets—DropBox, Google Drive, and WeTransfer. Each serves a different purpose. All internal business content assets like videos, photos, audio mixes, and masters live in DropBox. All administrative and collaborative documents including spreadsheets, word documents, outlines, agendas, and other related items live in Google Drive. For all client deliverables of multimedia files, I use WeTransfer.

It can be costly to maintain all of these platforms on a monthly or annual basis. However, staying organized and keeping all company assets aligned with their purpose benefits my business in the long run. I always know exactly where each asset is stored which makes it convenient for speedy retrieval and delivery. And best part of all it's a write off.



FOR MORE, SEE:

The Career Musician Toolkit

In ETHOS | The Career Musician's Workbook

Negotiating

Let's talk about money! Throughout my career I've been able to negotiate some really good pay rates for myself. Conversely, I've also neglected to negotiate acceptable rates and I suffered the consequences. These are the realities of being an independent contractor and it's important to know how to navigate these rough waters.

The first step is to research and self-educate. In the beginning, I sought out other career musicians who were better established than me. I inquired about the rates they believed to be fair and the rates they were commonly offered. I investigated the musicians union in every major music city to find out the scale rates and

exactly how they were determined. Based on my own talent and skill set at the time, I was able to determine where I landed on that scale.

For corporate gigs and big productions, pay rates can be predetermined and set in stone. However, not all gigs are created equal! There are so many types of gigs that land in the gray area of acceptable pay scales. Knowing this, it is our responsibility to secure the rates we deserve. When determining your rates, identify all of the variables of the gig. Is the gig live on stage? Is it a recording session? Is it a music video? Is it a live-stream concert? How far is the gig? Will I have to bring my own gear? Is there a tech rider with gear provided? If the money offered is not enough to cover your cost and time, either turn down the gig or try to negotiate a better rate.

A great way to protect your rights is by joining the musician's union, AFM (American Federation of Musicians). The union acts as a liaison between the production company and the staff they hire. The purpose of the union is to protect the rights of all of its members. I've had the union advocate for me on more than one occasion and it's paid off. I encourage you to find out if there is a local union in your area and research them.

Union scale rates can be substantial for studio work if you know how to properly draft your session contracts. This does require some research and applied effort. If you live in a major music town like New York, Nashville, or Los Angeles, it will certainly benefit you to become a union member and do as many union contract sessions as possible. We refer to these gigs as being “on the card.” If you’re in a Right-To-Work situation, technically you don’t have to be a member of the union and can work at your own will. It all depends on the type of work you’re doing, with whom you’re doing it, and where you are doing it.

As a session musician in Los Angeles, it was extremely beneficial for me to be an AFM Local 47 Union member—considering all the albums and film sessions I’ve played on. When I lived in Nashville I was a member of AFM local 257 which benefitted me for all of the albums I played on. Being a member of the union also secured my rights to royalties on every recording I performed. The residuals I continue to get for major projects in the past are incredibly helpful in sustaining me and my household to this day!

“Show me the money!” There are a few ways these royalties are dispersed to recording musicians. The Sound Recording Special Payments Fund, Film

Musicians Secondary Markets Fund, and the AFM SAG-AFTRA Intellectual Property Rights Distribution Fund. Between the three of these fund distributions alone, I have been able to get by when times were tough and the gigs were lean. If you're doing session work for major-label artists, TV and film score, or any type of live performance broadcast, I would encourage you to join these organizations.

Aside from union scales, pretty much everything is negotiable. Just be pragmatic about it. If your rates are too high, people will balk. If your rates are too low, you'll be perceived as an inexperienced amateur. The unwritten rule when it comes to negotiating is "You're not really negotiating unless you're willing to walk away from the deal." That being said, in the next section I discuss a good method which you should try to implement when negotiating.

The 2-Out-Of-3 Rule

The 2-out-of-3 Rule is also known as "The Unattainable Triangle." For every job, there are a total of three characteristics your work or performance can have. Your work can either be good, fast, or cheap. The rule is that your work can only have two of these qualities at one time, but never all three together.

Example 1: The client wants you to do a job **fast** and **cheap**. You can get the job done with a quick turnaround and you can do it at a discounted rate, but the client should not expect the work to be a masterpiece.

Example 2: The client wants the work to be **good** and **cheap**. The client should not expect a fast turnaround and you can complete the work according to your level of priority.

Example 3: The client wants the work to be **good** and **fast**, excellent! It's going to cost them top dollar. They need to pay you a good rate for your expertise and compensate you for making them a priority.

Please note, the 2-out-of-3 Rule is for your own internal self-management. This is NOT something you should divulge to a client. It's an unspoken rule that doesn't need to be brought up in conversation or during the negotiation process. It's a best-practices method that you can use to help prioritize your workload.

Invoicing And Collections

Getting paid in this business can be difficult sometimes. There are a number of reasons why your payment could

be delayed. Typically it's due to miscommunication between production departments. In these circumstances, it's important to develop a collections system that you can implement to ensure your payment is processed correctly before having to resort to drastic measures. I make sure to submit invoices for all of my work and provide all the possible payment methods. I am set up with an account on almost every payment app (i.e. paypal, venmo, zelle, cash app) so there is no excuse for not being able to pay me. As a career musician, you are a private contractor. If you are being paid for your services, then you need to provide an invoice to the client. This will come in handy for accounting records and taxes. I've been in situations where a client has taken almost a year to pay me for a job. But eventually, they paid me because I had my invoices organized and I was persistent in following up.

The trick that I employ is having my wife handle all of my invoicing and collections. After all, it's her money too, right? Having your own personal representative is a great way to alleviate some of the problems that may arise between you and the person responsible for paying you. Your representative is one step removed from the situation and can remain level-headed. If you don't have someone you can trust to handle this for you, creating a business manager alias can really come

in handy. An email address under the guise of your representative can also act as a buffer between you (the independent contractor), and the client. This could be something simple like: info@yourcompanyname.com, or assistant@yourcompanyname.com

For large corporations such as Disney or Netflix, it's normal to have a thirty to ninety-day net turnaround but it can take even longer than that in some cases. Set yourself up in such a way that you're never operating from a deficit. This way, you won't find yourself waiting desperately for funds.

TCM PRO TIP

Making money is one thing, but how you spend it is another. Before making a large purchase, ask yourself these questions: Can you afford to pay for it in cash? How important is this purchase? Will it help you grow your business? If the purchase is more of a "want" than a "need," then consider saving up for it and purchasing it at a later date. Budget accordingly and make all business-related purchases before the end of the year so that you can write it off on your tax return. Be sure to keep all receipts, original packaging materials, and instruction manuals, etc. This will come in handy if you decide to sell the equipment later or return it.

Quality Control

QC—the process of double and triple checking your work before submitting. This is especially pertinent if you do a lot of remote recording sessions. If this little detail is overlooked, it can make or break any deal and definitely hinder your chances of getting repeat business. In the case of sync music libraries, they tend to be very strict on their file titling protocols. You must scrub through each file, play the beginning, middle, and end in order to confirm that everything was printed the way it was supposed to be printed. Check the file specs and make sure you didn't accidentally bounce the wrong file type. Adhering to a strict protocol will greatly reduce the risk of mis-labeling files or having files potentially go missing. QC, QC, QC!

Submit And Forget

It's better to be pleasantly surprised, instead of anxiously disappointed. I've lost count of how many times I've submitted deliverables for a project only to wait eons for response from the client. I would then obsess over it, and waste time wondering if they liked what I submitted. Over time, I've learned to shift my focus. The trick is to move on quickly to the next project. Waiting for a response is something you just have to get used to. As you dive into the next project or gig with your

full attention, eventually you will hear back from the previous project regarding whether or not your music has been accepted. You will be pleasantly surprised when this happens because most likely by that time, you will have already forgotten about it. Submit and forget!

“An idle mind is the Devil’s workshop.” This is an old saying that means if you’re not busy with productive activities, bad thoughts have an easier time taking over your mind. By submitting and forgetting, you are setting your career in motion—and according to physics, an object in motion stays in motion. This kind of mindset requires you to have faith that your hard work will be rewarded.

Revisions

Be ready to have a client provide notes on your work. It’s a necessary part of the process. For in-person sessions, the collaboration between you and a client happens in real time, and by the end of the session all the work should be finalized. However, with remote sessions you’re passing files back and forth. Which means there will be several drafts of the work before it is finalized. These drafts are called revisions. Don’t expect your work to hit the bullseye on the first attempt.

It's important to set boundaries beforehand so that no one party gets taken advantage of. A good rule of thumb is to offer three revisions maximum. If the client cannot clearly articulate what they need after three revisions, chances are they don't know what they want. You should not be expected to do extra work without being compensated. If a client insists on more revisions, this is the time to employ your negotiation skills and determine a fair rate for you to keep working. Proceed with caution and be polite as you trade notes back and forth.

Build A Catalog

I've done my fair share of production library music for different companies over the years. This type of work requires you to have a home studio. It also requires you to do it all (i.e. writing, composing, arranging, orchestrating, playing instruments, singing, recording, engineering, mixing, and sometimes mastering). If you can get a handle on the home recording game, these jobs are excellent because they pay what's called "backend," which is another name for royalties. If you'd like to learn more about getting started in home recording, visit thecareermusician.com and download our free E-Guide, "*6 Steps to Recording Pro-Level Sessions From Home.*"

It's important to know that not all of these jobs pay an upfront production fee for your labor. There is good business in this sector of the industry if you are patient and willing to work for little to no upfront money. In the case of a project having no upfront production fees, I'm not concerned about whether or not my song makes the cut for a film or TV show. If it doesn't get used I've still won because I am repurposing the content as part of my catalog which will always remain as my IP (Intellectual Property). Each song I record and produce has the potential to be licensed at any time. As long as you keep stocking your catalog with new and fresh material and you actively seek sync placement opportunities, this work can be one of your most valuable streams of income. You'll most likely be working from a work brief which stipulates all of the requirements for the music you're composing.

TCM PRO TIP

Sync is short for synchronization which means putting music to picture in TV, Film or other Media. A brief is a document of instructions in regards to composing or songwriting for television, film and other multimedia uses. While you are composing or writing for a specific show or movie pitch, it is important to read the job brief several times over; making sure to follow every detail and listen to all reference examples. Before submitting your final draft, it's a good idea to go through and check the brief one more time. Any discrepancies between the brief and your final deliverables should be addressed and revised before hitting that send button. Some advertisement production houses and library music companies do their own mixing and mastering. These terms will be laid out ahead of time so there's no confusion as to who's responsible for what.

Go PRO With A P.R.O.

PRO stands for Performing Rights Organization. In the United States there are three main PROs: ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC. A PRO is an organization that collects royalties on behalf of the performer, writer, composer, and publisher of any published work. The PRO is responsible for documenting, processing, and delivering the royalty payments to the appropriate parties. Sign up with one

of the three organizations as a songwriter and register every piece of music that you write. It's important not to get PROs confused with distribution companies like DistroKid, CD Baby, or TuneCore. Those are completely different. A distribution company (aka aggregator) is merely the platform for getting your music into stores and streaming services. PROs and only PROs are the vehicle that gets you your well-earned money. The idea of leaving money on the table is not an option for any musician. Every penny counts!

Perhaps the most important aspect of establishing a sustainable career is the power of a catalog. If it weren't for my royalty payments there would have been periods of time that I wouldn't have been able to stay afloat. The sooner you can start writing and getting songs placed with artists and for sync licensing opportunities, the better. This will prove to be the gift that keeps on giving. You write and record the song only once, then it keeps providing you with income over time. Allocate a portion of your residual income to your savings. This is the way to build a stable financial future.



NOMAD on Warner Sound Stage with Charles Henri-Avelange (Composer), Anne Cecere (Senior Director, Creative - Film, TV & Visual Media at BMI) and Charley Londoño (Ent. Attny)

The Taxman Cometh

A crucial part of any sole proprietorship, DBA, Corp, or LLC is understanding how to file and pay your taxes. My advice? Hire a CPA (Certified Public Accountant). If you choose to go the distance on your own, be advised that you're embarking upon dangerous territory which can potentially cost you thousands of dollars or more if mistakes are made. I've had an accountant since the age of 18 when I first started gigging in my local scene. I've learned that In most cases, independent

contractors can write-off the majority of their expenses. What constitutes an expense? Anything you use for your business. In the case of career musicians this can include instruments, sound and lighting equipment, stage clothes, business apparatuses, office supplies, vehicles, hotels and travel cost, meals, etc. You can even include partial allotment of your home or apartment as studio and office expenses. The list goes on. The only way to find out what you qualify for is to do the research and enlist the help of a professional. Doing this will help keep your business safe!

TCM PRO TIP

The tools and apps that are available today make it easy to take control of your cash flow. When you start to earn a decent living from music, it's smart to find a good accountant. This will not only help you maintain your budget but will also be integral to preparing your tax returns. Knowing the various pros and cons of filing as a D.B.A. (Doing Business As), S Corp, or LLC, will help you maintain your business efficiently for your tax bracket.

Closing Thoughts

I want you to walk away with this thought: You must have multiple irons in the fire. Without a multi-streamed income, it is nearly impossible to sustain a living. In my thirty years in the game, I can undoubtedly say that I would not be where I am today if I didn't diversify at every opportunity given. There's no substitute for putting in the time and doing the work. Discipline doesn't wait for you to feel motivated to do it; it does it anyway. Your only limitation is what you are willing to pursue with passion and dedication. It's the simple fact that you are in control of you! Only you can answer the question: What type of career musician do I want to be?

As self-employed musicians, we live by "faith;" the faith that the next gig will come. This doesn't mean we should sit idly by; waiting for the next gig. While waiting, you should be busy doing your own work. By staying busy, we are perpetuating the future of more business! Your motto should always be "Get up, dress up, and show up!" I started out as a sideman guitarist and stayed in that role for many years. After playing on countless records and touring the world over a

few times, I realized that solely being a guitar player wasn't enough for me. This is the reason I started The Career Musician. I have been down every road you can imagine. It is my mission to help other musicians by sharing my own journey.



NOMAD at Barclays Center in New York City

Takeaways

The most important aspect of anything we do is “what’s the lesson?” What are the main takeaways and how can we use this information to become the best version of ourselves? Here’s what I’d like you to contemplate as you formulate your plan of attack in this industry:

Act with integrity via the concept of *ETHOS*. As more musicians adhere to a higher level of purpose and conduct, we will surely be better off as a community.

Know your “why.” Why are you embarking on this journey? What is your ultimate goal? How are you going to reach that goal? Why do you want to obtain that success? You must keep this in the forefront of your mind at all times to have a purpose in your direction.

Choose your path, diversify, and evolve. Reflect on your dreams and goals. Determine your strengths and your passions, then pursue them wholeheartedly. Branch out into a few areas that are related to your passion to diversify your skillset.

Multi-streamed incomes will be the crux of your survival. It's economically beneficial to have at least three areas in which you can monetize your talents. Put them to good use and remain focused within these realms. In time, they will produce results.

Gigs will come and go. By definition, a gig is temporary. Keep that in mind when you audition or land a job. Nothing lasts forever. As long as you keep your eyes on your goals, nothing can deter you from achieving them.

Auditioning is a lifestyle. Everything you do is an audition for something else. People are watching, even when you don't realize it. Do your best at all times and it will work in your favor. You will get the gig time and time again.

Your reputation is your representation. It's important to maintain a professional demeanor on and off the stage and in or out of the studio. If you carry yourself with dignity and professionalism, your reputation will precede you in the best way.

Maintain your business savvy. Conduct business with a structured corporate mindset and develop your infrastructure. Be prepared and ahead of the game by taking control of your time. You can accomplish much more than just the ability to play your instrument. Set yourself up for success.

Build your empire and procure a body of work. Your IP (intellectual property) can be used as a monetizable entity. This will enable you to go beyond the gig. Earning money while you're not working is the essence of passive income.

And finally... Thank you for taking the time to read this book and committing to **ETHOS | The Career Musician's**

Code. I'm confident that it will propel you along your musical journey. Here's to making music your business as a *Career Musician!*



NOMAD on Big Stage at TD Jake's Fest

Credits

Written & Edited by: Michael NOMAD Ripoll

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Morence, Danyelle Sanders

Sincere Gratitude

Thank you, Danyelle; my eternal sunshine that will perpetually burn bright in my heart, mind, body, and soul. I couldn't have done this without you by my side as my best friend, life partner, and cheerleader. You believe in me even when I don't.

Thank you Nina. You are my angelito niña milagrosa. Your musical gifts are just beginning to reveal themselves. I am so grateful and proud of you!

Thank you mom for always believing in me and praying for me. I'll continue to love you through the end of time.

My brothers Jason and Robbie for putting up with my crazy nerd muzoid ways growing up.

Thank you, Erik-G; my "No. 2," my protégé. The universe definitely knew "what was up" when we crossed paths, my friend. I see myself in you and I look forward to the incredible career musician that you are becoming.

Thank you to my Latino brothers in arms, John Santos and Richie Peña for always being 110% committed to

getting the project done! We've lived a lifetime together and here's to many more.

Thank you, David "Foz" Foster for vouching for me. Sharing the stage with you over the past decade has taught me so much. As an eternal student of the craft of music, I am inspired by the talented force that you are!

Thank you, Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds for showing me how to quietly observe without interfering. Thank you for trusting me to be your band leader for over a decade. The time we spent together in the studio and on stage is invaluable. What an honor it has been!

Thank you, to all of the artists, musicians, singers, composers, engineers, producers, songwriters, production managers, agents, promoters, technicians, and stage-hands with whom I've worked. I hope to see you soon in the studio or on the road!



NOMAD and Alex Al (Bassist for Michael Jackson) at Arsenio Hall Show



NOMAD with Darrell Crooks and Don Peake (Guitarist from The Wrecking Crew)



NOMAD with JR Robinson, Greg Phillinganes and Nathan East



NOMAD and Nathan East



NOMAD with Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak (Silk Sonic)



NOMAD with His Best Friends: Star Thomas, Eric Wibbelsmann, Greg Tellason and Richie Peña



*NOMAD and Steve Ferrone
(Drummer for Tom Petty)*



NOMAD and Raphael Saadiq



NOMAD and Tim Davies



*NOMAD with Danyelle Sanders Ripoll
and Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds*

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About The Author

Michael NOMAD Ripoll, is a composer, music producer, music director, session and touring guitarist who's been active in the industry since the 1990s. NOMAD has toured the world many times over. He has been featured on countless GRAMMY-winning records and shared the stage with



several celebrity artists. His mission is to empower musicians around the globe with strategies for a sustainable career. When not in the studio or on stage, NOMAD can be found spending time with his wife Danyelle, daughter Nina, and family pup Rosie, while hiking or biking on local trails in Southern California.

To learn more info, visit
TheCareerMusician.com

“Nomad is one of today’s top guitarists. His style and influences transcend to consistent and great performances every time.”

~Kenny “Babyface” Edmonds
12-Time Grammy Award Winner, Producer/Songwriter

“Nomad is expressive, emotional, and inventive on the six string. He’s in a class all his own and it’s been a real honor and privilege to collaborate with him over the years. I’m lucky to know him.”

~Leslie Odom Jr.
Tony and Grammy Award-Winning Performer

This book teaches you how to **become a successful professional musician**, a tried and true Career Musician. What exactly does being a Career Musician mean? You will earn a living from playing your instrument, writing songs, composing, producing, teaching... You name it... You will learn how to capitalize on your creative talents!

Through the author’s 30 years of experience as a career musician himself, Nomad walks you through ETHOS, a system of guiding life principles that every pro-musician should adhere to in order to maximize their creative output and **unlock the hidden potential of what they can achieve** by running their operations as a small business owner and entrepreneur!



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