



FIRST NATIONS

TAX, BUSINESS & LEGAL

Processes & Tools For Your Music Business

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Processes & Tools For Your Music Business

FIRST NATIONS TAX, BUSINESS & LEGAL



This resource helps you build practical systems and processes for your business, covering communication, task management, finances and sustainable ways of working.

A clear plan helps turn your big ideas into reality, keeping everyone on track, whether you're recording an album, planning a tour or creating new merchandise. Good processes provide the structure needed for growth, preventing chaos and saving time. This guide offers simple systems and tools to help your music business run smoothly.

For example, as an artist manager and business mentor, I have found that implementing a shared calendar and task management tool completely transformed how my team worked together. It reduced confusion, kept us on track, and gave the artist client more time to focus on creating.

Task lists (to-do lists)

The simplest way to start. A list helps you see everything that needs to be done.

- **How it works:** Write down every step of a project. As you complete a task, you tick it off. You can create lists for daily, weekly, or project-specific tasks.
- **Good for:** Managing personal workload and small, straightforward projects.
- **Tools:** You can use a simple notebook, or digital tools like Monday.com, Asana, or even the Notes app on your phone.

Gantt charts or timelines

A visual way to see your project schedule.

- **How it works:** This chart shows you the start and end dates for each task and how they connect. It's great for seeing the big picture and understanding project deadlines.
- **Good for:** Larger projects with many moving parts and related tasks, like an album release or tour plan.
- **Tools:** Many project management apps can create these automatically. You can also use a simple spreadsheet. See the guide below for apps that may help.

Communicating with your team

- **Schedule regular meetings:** Hold consistent check-ins (yarns) to share updates and plan.
- **Use a single communication platform:** Centralise team talk in one place like a WhatsApp group chat or Slack to prevent missed messages.
- **Maintain a shared calendar:** Use a digital calendar like to track all important dates, from gigs to deadlines.

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Managing your money

- **Create project budgets:** Before starting, list all expected costs and income to ensure a project is financially viable.
- **Set up invoicing:** Send professional invoices to get paid. Use a template or accounting software like Xero, QuickBooks, or HNRV.
- **Track all expenses:** Keep a detailed record of every business purchase for tax time and to monitor your business and its overall financial health.

Creating your operational structure

- **Define team roles:** Document who is responsible for key tasks like bookings, social media, and finances to create clarity. This will help you clarify who is on your core team.
- **Document workflows:** Create simple, step-by-step guides for common tasks (e.g., booking a show or processing an invoice) to save time and ensure consistency.
- **Key performance indicators:** Establish measurable goals to track progress and evaluate the success of your business activities, such as social media growth, income targets, or project completion timelines and deliverable to the client.

Building a sustainable future

- **Practice transparency:** Be open and honest in all dealings to build trust with your team and partners.
- **Integrate your values:** Embed your cultural protocols and respectful practices into how your business operates.

Prioritise wellbeing, avoid cultural burnout

Set clear work-life boundaries and create practices that support your health and your team's, such as using a cultural rider for live events. It's also wise to get clarity on how much you need to work, to generate the income you need, so you don't do too much.

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Use this checklist to set up effective, practical systems for your music business.

1. Decide what you need to succeed

- Brainstorm how you and your team work and communicate best. List the features you need in your project management apps - like compiling mailing lists, task delegation, or software integration.

2. Choose your task list tool

- Pick a task list management system (a notebook or online tools like GoogleTask, Monday, Asana), consider the functions offered by each, especially if you need to present timelines or Gantt charts for bigger projects.

3. Streamline team communication

- Schedule regular check-ins, set up a central chat (WhatsApp, Slack, MS Teams) and use a shared calendar (for example, Gmail and Google Calendar) for all key dates.

4. Improve collaboration by making it easy to find information

- Use cloud storage (for example, [Google Drive](#)) so everyone can access documents and info easily.

5. Write down who does what

- Clearly document who handles tasks like bookings, social media, and finances, for example. Outline simple, repeatable step-by-step processes for regular activities. Using a tool like [MIRO](#) can be useful to map out your processes.

6. Create a budget and track your finances

- Work with an accountant if you are new to budgeting, and create project budgets listing all expected income and costs. Use accounting software or spreadsheets for invoicing and expense tracking, like [HENRY](#), [Xero](#), or [QuickBooks](#).

7. Automate invoicing & expenses

- Set up a system (software or [spreadsheet](#)) to issue invoices and record every business transaction for tax and financial management. Talk to an accountant if you're unsure, usually they will offer one free consultation.

8. Build for sustainability

- Creating strong foundations from the start and fostering open communication that reflects your values and cultural practices will set you up for success. Establishing clear work-life boundaries to support your team's wellbeing is equally important. Consider drafting a [simple policy or handbook](#) - even as a small business or sole trader - as the process will help clarify how you want to work and operate effectively.

Looking for more resources?
Find more resources like this
one at musicnsw.com/resources

MusicNSW works, creates and listens on unceded Aboriginal land across the state. We honour elders past and present and acknowledge all First Nations peoples as the original music makers, storytellers and knowledge holders. Always was, always will be.

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