



Show Production Guide

Updated September 4, 2026

Looking to start a new comedy group or show? Already have a show or group and you are just looking for new resources to manage your group or show? This is the document for you! The purpose of this guide is to help you create and manage your comedy group or show. It's a collection of best practices from many shows that have come before you.

To be clear, this is just a guide to help you create a show and is not intended to be Comedy Spot policy. Comedy Spot management is not in charge of casting or managing your show, group, or team. We also do not have control over your show, group, or team's decisions. Ultimately, you will run your group in a manner that serves your group the best, but we do hope this collection of best practices, developed from over 20 years of trial and error, will help your show thrive.

GETTING STARTED

Okay, let's do this! Here are some things you might want to consider as you start to create your new improv group, sketch team, or comedy show.

What is it?

What type of show are you going to create? Form an improv group? Create a show that features characters? Start your own sketch group? Create a show that features stand-up comics in a new show format? It's important to know what type of show you want to create. Our main advice is to keep the idea simple. For example, "I want to create a dating game style show using characters instead of real people."

Sometimes new show creators will try to blend several genres or concepts into one show. For Example, "It's part sketch show, part improv, part standup, and I want it to be a cross between a Sitcom and elimination show." "I want to create an improv team that has a brand new opening and form every time and I want there to be musical sketch opening and closing every show."

Focus on doing one thing extraordinary instead of having to master an extraordinary amount of skills.

Voice

Your show should have a distinct voice and unique hook (special quality or feature) that is different from other shows, which makes it easily recognizable. Your show idea can come from you, or be inspired by your relationship with a group of performers that share common interests. You should be able to easily describe or "sell" your show in one sentence. Example: "YOU! The

Musical is a completely improvised musical inspired by the audience suggestion of a title.”
“Bardic Improvisation is an improv show using all the tropes of a D&D campaign”

Overview

When you think you have an idea for a show with a unique voice and hook, create an overview that you can refer to and update as the show evolves. There are several overviews that management can share with you for shows, like Camp Comedy Spot, YOU! The Musical, ACL, and Final Countdown. Your overview may include the following:

- Description of the show
- The show form or structure
- Voice
- How many cast members are required
- Length of the show
- What your intro should include
- Description of different show elements and skills
- Tech Requirements
- Important tips, notes, guidelines, and lessons learned
- Rehearsal schedule and expectations
- Group expectations
- Group roles and responsibilities
- Establish how are decisions made
- Establish how group members are invited and uninvited to perform
- Have discussions about who is going to give you feedback and how the group will maintain/improve quality.
- Rehearsal and writing exercises
- Warm-ups
- History of the team

Group Expectations

Being a cast member in a show comes with other responsibilities besides just performing. All cast members should help promote, attend rehearsals, and fulfill other duties to help with the success of the show. Simply being available to perform does not contribute to the overall success of the group. Your group should have a discussion early on establishing what is expected of each cast member. If your group has already been performing for a while, take a moment to reset and have these discussions. Here are some questions that may be helpful in establishing those expectations:

- How many rehearsals will we need between shows to be successful?
- How many hours will I need to set aside for fulfilling other responsibilities of being on the team?
- When should we have post-show discussions, and for how long?
- What else is expected of me? For example: Should we attend other shows at the Comedy Spot? Should we have monthly meetings? Should we plan on producing workshops? Do we want to attend festivals outside of Sacramento?
- Overall, how many total hours per week or month will I need to set aside for the group?

DECISIONS AND LEADERSHIP

Before moving forward with casting, establish who is “in charge” and how decisions are made.

Sometimes establishing leadership and the decision making process is easy. For example, if you are producing a standup or variety show, maybe you make *all* the decisions about the show's management, the talent that is booked, how to promote, and the voice and focus of your show.

With improv and sketch shows this is usually way more complicated. Who casts the show? How is that determined? Who removes people from the cast? How is that determined? When you make money doing the show how is that divided? Who determines how that money is spent?

Please, have this discussion now and let new performers and guest performers know who is in charge and how decisions are made when they join the group. The conversation you DON'T have now, will turn into complications later. Guaranteed! Why do you think this document was created?

Leadership

Maybe your group has one director or producer that makes all of the decisions based on feedback from the rest of the cast. Maybe the founding members of the group all have an equal say regarding these matters. It is important to discuss your leadership positions and their responsibilities so that everyone is clear.

Decisions

Maybe everyone in the group has an equal vote and all decisions are made based on majority rule or maybe your group doesn't make decisions unless everyone unanimously agrees to move in that direction. Maybe the creator of the show is also the director, and producer of the show and makes all the decisions for the group.

It doesn't matter who you choose as your leader(s) or how you arrive at your decisions, but we strongly encourage you to establish these policies before moving forward.

CASTING

Now that you have found your voice and have a leadership team, it is time to start casting your show. A ton of talented stand-up, sketch, character and improvisers perform regularly at the Comedy Spot. Whether you invite performers to join your cast or hold auditions, cast performers that believe in the show, are dedicated to its success, are best qualified, and are truly available to put in the time to meet the expectations of the group.

Important Note: All members of an independently produced improv show must have been cast on Helix in the past, for your show to be considered for a Friday or Saturday night time slot. Why? Performers on Helix perform every week and get feedback on how they can improve. The

lessons learned by actually getting on stage and performing each week are valuable, and can't be taught in a classroom. The skills you learn on Helix will stay with you long after you have moved on to other shows.

Super Important Note: Cast performers who represent a diverse cross-section of people with different backgrounds and stories. Your group/show/team will be stronger for it. If an audience member sees themselves represented in a show, they are more likely to return.

Casting an Improv Show

The Comedy Spot created the Helix program to train performers and develop their skills. If you are looking for new cast members, this is a great resource. Helix team members are the most trained performers at the Comedy Spot and have experience being in shows.

When we updated the Comedy Spot curriculum and created the Helix Program, we tried to imagine what skills the "perfect improviser" would possess. Of course, no one is perfect, but when you are casting a show, try to find cast members that exhibit or are constantly working on developing these skills:

- Basic skills, including eye contact, voice projection, listening, agreement, and editing
- States or finds/labels a pattern at the beginning of a scene
- Heightens a pattern to crazy town
- Able to play unusual characters as well as supportive grounded characters
- Can initiate patterns and create scenes that the audience connects with; simple, fun patterns
- Shows the pattern instead of talking about it
- Is dynamic and interesting to watch on stage; engages the audience, has stage presence
- Plays a range of characters and has good acting skills
- Is physical, uses the environment of the scene, and creatively uses the space provided for a performance
- Knows their personal [comfort moves](#) that they use as a crutch, and try to avoid them or knows how to use them when they are justified
- Supports scene partners and teammates; is positive and supportive
- Has a unique background, experiences, and voice
- Plays selfless in the interest of the show instead of trying to be the center of attention

You should also be looking for performers who act professionally and are supportive members of the Comedy Spot community and have the follow attributes:

- Is on time
- Acts appropriately on stage and off
- Is a performer that other performers like working with
- Takes notes and asks questions about their performance so they can improve
- Sees other shows at the Comedy Spot and supports the community

Guest Performers

Invite guests to perform with your team. It helps the Comedy Spot create more stage opportunities and helps performers develop their skills. Guest performers also bring new life and energy to your show, and may be candidates to replace a performer who leaves the show. Guest performers might even help you discover something new about your show.

If you are reading this and want to perform on an established show, make that known to the producer of the show. **Be vocal. Take your shot. Make your own opportunities.**

Onboarding

Before bringing on a new cast member, they should be made aware of time commitments and expectations before being officially cast. Create a list of things to cover with new cast members or guest performers. These may include:

- Sharing your show's overview
- Announcing the new or guest performer on social media
- Sharing your rehearsal schedule
- Discussing dress code, helpful tips, and guidelines
- Discuss who is in charge and how decisions are made
- Add new players to your communication platforms. (email, text group, Facebook Messenger thread)
- Having a meeting to welcome the performer and discuss cast member roles, leadership, your form, introduce the other cast members, and answer any questions
- Have a team discussion about boundaries. To help with this discussion the Comedy Spot has created a **Team Boundaries & Safety Discussion** guide as part of the Sacramento Comedy Spot's [Misconduct Policies and Procedures](#).

GROUP MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Discuss what roles cast members will need to fill to ensure that your group runs smoothly, fans are finding your show, and you continue to improve the quality of your show. The most successful groups find ways to delegate the duties and responsibilities of the show. It doesn't matter what you call these positions, or if one person fills several roles, or maybe you don't need some of these positions. The most important thing is, everyone understands each other's responsibilities and what decision making powers they have. Here are some roles and responsibilities you might consider:

Show Liaison

One group member should be designated as the show liaison. The show liaison is responsible for communicating with Comedy Spot and responsible for submitting your show for consideration to perform on Thursday nights. If your show is scheduled on a Thursday night, your Show Liaison will also discuss show dates, rehearsal times, and payment for shows with Comedy Spot management.

Maybe there is more than one liaison- one coordinates show dates and pay while another coordinates rehearsal dates, outings, or meetings.

Producer/Creator

One of the roles could be a Producer or Creator in charge of overseeing the different roles of the team. The Producer of the show may also be in charge of the decisions for the group, but again, everyone involved in creating the show should discuss roles prior to starting to perform.

Director and/or Coach

Each team should decide who will be in charge of setting a plan for coaching or directing the team. Obviously a standup show doesn't need a coach or director. But it's a good idea to establish these roles for an improv, sketch, or variety show. Sometimes the director or coach is someone in the group and other times you might want to have an outside coach or director. Sometimes this responsibility falls on different people at different times. Again, be sure to clearly define your group's roles.

Social Media and Promotions

Have a cast member(s) be in charge of creating social media post for your shows, remind cast members to post on social media to invite friends and family on to FB events, send emails, and update public online calendars, and ask the Comedy Spot's Social Media Coordinator to make posts on your behalf and share posts from your accounts.

Justine Lopez is the Sacramento Comedy Spot's Social Media Coordinator, and can be reached by email: justine@saccomedyspot.com

Other Responsibilities

Assign cast members to other responsibilities that may be specific to your group, like inviting guest performers or special guests to be on your shows.

NOTES AND POST-SHOW MEETINGS

Most successful teams at the Comedy Spot have some sort of post-show review afterwards to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each performance. Some groups prefer a group review where each member shares their impressions of the show. Other groups prefer to have an outside coach or director to give them notes. Other groups have a member of the team give notes to the rest of the group.

Choose a method and the rules that work best for your group. The important thing is to make sure there is honest reflection after each show so you can continue to improve and evolve.

Tip for giving notes

Performers are always trying to do the best they can. Be mindful that you are giving notes to someone that is creating something personal. Put yourself in their shoes. Here are some other points you should consider when giving notes:

- Ask the performers what they thought of the show before starting notes. "Does anyone want to begin by talking about their personal performance?" This will start the notes as a discussion. This will help you know the temperature of the room before giving notes.
- Be honest and encouraging, and avoid being combative.

- If you are receiving the note, remember, take it and move on. If you challenge every note, people will be afraid to give them to you, and you will have less opportunities to improve.
- Start off with corrective notes. Don't bury the lead. But also try to balance those corrective notes by reinforcing things the cast or an individual did well.
- Notes should focus on **skills** and **not on the creative choices** a performer makes during a show. We don't want to critique performers' voices and background. We want to focus on skills to make them better performers.
- Avoid a straight recap of the show. Have a discussion about what worked or didn't.
- Avoid abstract notes and philosophical comedy discussions.
- Give your note once and move on. Don't overly explain or dwell on one piece of feedback for too long.
- If a note is meant for one particular cast member, do not present the note as, "We should all remember..." Just give the person the note. If you present the note as a team note it will not reach the one person who really needs to hear it.
- If you need to correct an individual performer's behavior, or give them a negative note that may make them defensive in a group environment, designate one or two people on your team to speak to the cast member away from your group discussion.
- At the end of your discussion, let performers know they can speak to the leader of the team one-on-one if they have questions, or need clarification on a note, or if they don't feel comfortable talking in front of the rest of the group.

BUILD YOUR AUDIENCE

Here are some ways you can build your audience. Special thanks to everyone who has contributed to this section, especially Sara Aghamohammadi.

Very First Step

The very first step in building an audience is to have a QUALITY SHOW that is ALWAYS IMPROVING. If your shows are successful, your fans will tell other people about it. Most people find out about the Comedy Spot and show through word of mouth.

Basic First Steps

- Have updated group photos to share on social media. Employees or volunteers take action shots of almost every show. [Click here to see photos](#) from your show.
- Take care of your fans and create memorable moments so they will share your story.
 - Thank them for being at the shows at the end of the night.
- Create a logo for your group; create a brand.
- Nothing beats a face-to-face invite to one of your shows. Always remember to talk to and invite your co-workers, family, members of other social circles, and the employee at the counter of the store you frequent, to your shows.
- Collect emails at the end of shows so you can email your fans directly.
- Create a poster for the Comedy Spot front window and to post around town. You can send a digital file to Tina Jett (tina@saccomedyspot.com) to have a front window poster created.
 - Full posters should be 11" x 17", vertical orientation.

- If you are sharing a time slot with another show the Comedy Spot would prefer that both shows are on one poster with the time, date, and ticket price in the middle.
 - Posters should NOT say, “The Comedy Spot Presents” This is your show at the Comedy Spot and not a show the Comedy Spot is producing.
- Be sure that your ticketing page on the Comedy Spot calendar is up to date and features the information you want your fans to know. [Contact Tina Jett](#) and provide her with pictures and logos to make your ticketing page pop. Make sure your show description has some sizzle to help sell tickets.

Intermediate Steps

- A week before your show, walk through Midtown and leave flyers at businesses, especially coffee shops.
 - Introduce yourself as a performer at the Comedy Spot and ask to leave flyers with them. Tell them what the show is about. Keep it short, “I’m part of an all-femme science based improv team”
 - If your show has a specific angle, like Karaoke Improv, then it might be worth asking bars that offer karaoke if you can leave your flyers with them as well.
 - Some coffee shops and businesses that allow flyering are:
 - Zoe Coffee and Tacos
 - Pachemama
 - World Traveler Cafe
 - Old Soul
 - Teneral Winery
- Give out free tickets to people you see around town.
- Make accounts on the following pages and create events on their calendars. You can post single or recurring events; most of these websites will post to their calendar for free. You may want to hold off on any paid advertising for later. Have a graphic ready to upload that is less than 2MB.
 - Downtown Grid
 - Sac 365
 - Sac News & Review
- Create social media accounts for your show.
 - Post regularly, and interact with your followers. Entertain your fans on social media. Feature performers, show what happens backstage, cross promote with other shows.
 - Note: You can always borrow camera and filming equipment from the Comedy Spot.
 - Plan to post once every few days leading up to a show. You can share this task with teammates. It’s easiest to post from your team’s account and tag individuals and collaborate with the saccomedyspot account so they can share your posts.
 - Keep in mind that when you share a story that someone has tagged you in, the link is not active on your story. When you’re sharing the story to your account, add a fresh link to the ticketing page on your story (usually just put it over the previous link) so people can click on an active link.
 - Use hashtags for more engagement #datenight #sacramento #midtownsac

- Announce your social media accounts from the stage.
- Post show information and QR codes on the wood wall next to the showroom entrance for fans to get more information about the show, the cast, join your social media and contact lists.

Advanced Step

Once you have a great product and your friends are digging what you are laying down, then it *might* be time to move on to Meta Ads.

CAUTION: The Comedy Spot would prefer that you lean into word of mouth promotions, flyering, and social media instead of paying for ads.

- **Meta Ads-** Avoid spending too much money on Meta ads but they are worth a conservative investment.
 - \$40-50 for ads to run between 2-3 weeks before a show will get you enough engagement. Anything more than that follows the law of diminishing returns.
 - If you create a reel, keep it under 10-15 seconds. Most people won't watch the full reel.
 - Keep your graphics simple and clean with just the info needed: team name, day/time, Sac Comedy Spot (don't bother with address, VBO will give them that info), and QR code and/or hyperlink to get tickets.
 - Keep your descriptions short but interesting.
 - As for the target audience, keep it broad. For STEM Fatales, they choose locations as Sacramento, Placer, and Yolo counties; ages 18+; science; comedy.

Note: If a group is unsure of how the show will be received, they subconsciously promote the show less. They may be unsure of the form, unsure of the sketches in the show, or upset about the lack of rehearsal time before the show. There might be some drama simmering under the surface. No matter the distraction, if performers are unsure of how the show will be received, they subconsciously don't invite as many people to the show.

SAFETY

We are always concerned about the safety of everyone at the Comedy Spot. Here are some safety reminders:

- Use of food, liquids, glitter, and/or any other materials that could damage the stage, create a safety risk, or create a mess must be approved in advance.
- Do not use anything, including water, fire, props, or costumes, that may bring harm to yourself, another cast member, or audience member, or that may damage the stage, stage walls, or televisions.
- If you invite an audience member to participate on stage, take care of them. Help them on and off stage, make sure the stage is clear of hazards, and make sure they have plenty of light when they return to their seats. (Ask the Stage Tech to turn on the house

lights for a moment.) Never put audience members in a situation where they could be injured.

- Real knives, guns, or swords are NEVER permitted on stage.
- While food and drinks may be brought into the Comedy Spot, there is absolutely no outside alcohol allowed at any time.
- Avoid climbing on chairs, other cast members, walls, and windows. Know your physical limitations.
- Performers may not be on stage if they are visibly drunk or under the influence of drugs.
- Don't perform near the televisions on either side of the stage.
- Never run off stage and back on, you may trip stage.
- Never shoot or throw anything at audience members or above the stage or in the direction of the projector in front of the stage.
- There is a fire suppression system that runs atop the stage. Never hang or drape anything on this pipe or shoot or throw anything at this pipe. It may cause a flood inside the Comedy Spot.
- Be mindful of the stage mics in front of the stage. Do not kick or push them over.
- Be sure to inform guest performers of these safety warnings.

TECH FOR YOUR SHOW

The Comedy Spot supplies you with a Stage Tech to make you look and sound great on stage. Try to keep your tech needs as simple as possible. If your show requires special audio, video, and/or lighting cues, or if you would like a demonstration of our tech capabilities please contact Techs in advance. Remember, keep your tech **SIMPLE**, especially at the beginning. Always try to eliminate variables that might affect your show.

The simplest show tech has an intro and lights up, and then at the end of the show, lights out. If you don't need tech, don't add it. We will assume that each show has a standard introduction similar to this, "Welcome to the Sacramento Comedy Spot, it's time for Gamier Game Show, please welcome to the stage the cast of Gamier Game Show."

Also, the default is that we turn on the red light with 5 minutes left in your show. We will blackout and end your show as close to 25 minutes as possible, unless you inform the Stage Tech that you will "call" your own show. Calling your own show means that you will end your show from the stage without a blackout before 25 minutes. If you go over 25 minutes when you are calling your show, we will start to play music quietly to indicate that you should end your show as soon as possible.

Please send all files (videos, powerpoints, music, graphics) to the Techs as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours in advance of your show. Please send all tech files to tech@saccomedyspot.com

Helpful Tech Hints

- Don't play videos or music off of YouTube or Spotify. If there is a video or music you would like to use, please contact Brian to download the video prior to the show.
- Music files should be in mp3 format. Videos should be in mov or mp4 format.
- Have your video and music files cued up to when you would like them to start. If you need help editing please ask Brian.
- Always bring back up files of your Tech with you on a thumb drive to the show just in case even though you have submitted your tech in advance.
- Don't film videos off of YouTube with your phone and use them. Download the YouTube video for best sound and picture quality.
- If you have any unusual requests ask us in advance. We can usually solve any tech challenge with prior notice and a little bit of time.
- Don't wait till the last minute to work out tech requirements, especially right before a show. It's stressful for you and our Stage Techs. Additionally, trying to submit tech right before the show is extremely stressful. The Techs want you to look good, but when they receive tech at the last minute they may not be able to prepare properly. If we receive your tech in advance we can test it to make sure it is working as intended.

THE NOT-SO-FUN PARTS OF STARTING A COMEDY GROUP

Let's be honest: This is a comedy group of friends, not a large corporation with an HR department. Most comedy groups are formed when friends with overlapping interests decide to form a team. The great thing about starting a comedy group is that you will be surrounded by talented passionate people that, in many cases, become lifelong friends.

Because all of you are friends and very passionate about your group, **there will be disagreements**. As we stated before, make sure that your group knows who is in charge, and how decisions are made. In many cases, disagreements will be settled through communication and consensus.

Sometimes disagreements are difficult to resolve, so this is the section where we try to address some of the pitfalls other groups have fallen into.

Transparent, Honest, Communication

It's hard to share critical feedback with your group. Hopefully the leader of your group is able to address challenges in a constructive manner. But sometimes there are challenges that need to be discussed with the entire group. DO NOT break into factions and have these discussions. Have these discussions with the full group. Conversations in the dark allow challenges to fester. THIS IS NOT EASY. We've been through it. If you need the support of a mediator, please reach out to veteran performers, a Comedy Spot leader, or management so they can sit with your group and help sort out your challenges.

If you haven't had a team discussion about boundaries the Comedy Spot has created a **Team Boundaries & Safety Discussion** guide as part of the Sacramento Comedy Spot's [Misconduct Policies and Procedures](#).

You may also seek help from the Conduct Committee by emailing conduct@saccomedyspot.com if you need help finding a mediator. Disagreements between cast members is usually not a violation of the Comedy Spot Misconduct Policies, but we are still willing to help you find a mediator. Click to read the Comedy Spot's [Misconduct Policies and Procedures](#).

Texting and Emailing

Don't do it. If you are about to write something that might be interpreted as negative or critical, stop and call that person, have a zoom meeting, or ask to meet in person. Emails, and especially text messages, are terrible ways to communicate your concerns.

If you are going to remove someone from your group, do it in person, by zoom, or over the phone, but not email or text. Emailing or texting someone bad news might be a way of avoiding short term discomfort, but may result in fractured friendships, lingering questions, and negative feelings toward members of your group and the Comedy Spot in general.

Tough Conversations

As your group evolves and grows, a cast member may not be meeting the expectations of the team.

Oftentimes, a cast member that was previously dedicated to the team might have a new job, start a family, and/or have additional responsibilities, and can't dedicate as much time to the team.

If you have concerns about another performer, bring those concerns to the entire group, so your concerns can be addressed. Most of the time, cast members will make changes to improve. But they can't if nobody says anything.

If your group has concerns, you have to initiate a supportive, kind conversation about those expectations, how the performer needs to improve, a timeline to correct the behavior, and the consequences of not meeting those expectations. Then, if the group decides the best course of action is to remove the individual from the team, they know exactly why. They may not agree with your decision, but they understand why you made the decision and that the decision was made using the decision making process established when your group was formed. No matter what, be compassionate and supportive. You do not want to lose them as a friend or a member of the Comedy Spot community.

Again, never have tough conversations via email or text.

Comedy Groups Dissolve

Comedy groups dissolve. It is a difficult fact. It's heartbreaking. It's difficult to let it go, you've established a brand, you are afraid you won't find another team- **but it is better to dissolve a group than to continue to be in a situation where you and other members of the group are unhappy.** You may not be able to salvage the group, but hopefully you will be able to salvage your relationship with the rest of the members.

Let it go. If you are having more conversations about how to salvage the group and how to get along than how to make the show better, it is time to dissolve the group. Be okay with that.

Have a plan, **before you start to perform**, about how the group will dissolve and what factors will signal that the group should be dissolved.

Similarly, sometimes it is better to leave a group than continue to have disagreements about the direction and management of the group.

When should I leave?

Things change. Groups change. If your show is no longer fun and/or the quality of the show has slipped, it's important to have a transparent, positive, open conversation with the rest of the group. Try to reestablish your voice, roles, or expectations for the group. **But ultimately, if things don't change, it's time to step away from the group.** We know how hard that is, but other opportunities will be available. You didn't fail. This is just an opportunity to start something new and work with new people. Don't stay with a group that makes you unhappy, and don't expect other performers to have the same values and expectations as you.

Maybe *your* circumstances have changed and you aren't able to contribute as much time as you once did. You have to be honest with yourself. Do you still have the time necessary to effectively contribute to the success of your group? We all WANT to perform with our friends, but do you have the bandwidth to support the group? If you just have time for show, but not rehearsals or maintaining the group. Maybe it's time to take a break. Maybe it is time to step away from the group completely. It sucks to have to make that decision, but it is ultimately better to leave on a positive note.

Regular Cast Member Check-Ins

In most cases, when groups first form, all the members are completely committed to the success of the show and make time in their schedule to meet the team's expectations. Over time, cast members might have less time to devote to the team due to changes at work, home, or new interests and commitments. It is sometimes difficult for cast members to communicate to the rest of the team that they need a break or need to leave the team altogether.

Check in with cast members at regular intervals determined by your group. Review the expectations of the team, ask cast members if they still have the bandwidth and interest in participating, and make it okay for cast members to go on break or separate from the team.

You can also use these regular check-ins to talk about the show goals, review team expectations, revisit group boundaries, have discussions about ways to improve the show, and revisit team roles and responsibilities. And have beers and food.

TYPES OF PRODUCTIONS AT THE COMEDY SPOT

Independent

Independent shows are produced by you! You have the idea, you cast the show, and we support you by providing you with a place to perform, rehearsal space if needed, and notes to improve. The Comedy Spot management does not interfere with your group/show decisions.

Independently produced shows start by being scheduled on Thursdays. Most shows that are scheduled on Thursdays have a 25 minute run time.

Some **examples of independently produced shows** are: Lady Business, ACL, Bardic Improvisation, Murder You Wrote, Capitol PUNishment, YOU! The Musical, Trash Movie Improv, RIOT, Short Cuts, Squad Patrol, Queermedians, and TURNT.

Comedy Spot Produced (House)

These are shows that are produced by the Comedy Spot and include shows like Helix, Open Mic, Camp Comedy Spot, Improv Fight Club, Halloween Show, and Holiday Show.

Guest Shows

These shows are national headliners, world tours, out-of-town producers, or groups in Sacramento that are not a product of our comedy school. These shows usually have their own following and are usually booked on Fridays and Saturdays nights or whatever night is appropriate. Examples of **guest shows**: Neil Hamburger, The Midnight Show, The Set, Cambridge Footlights, Kevin McDonald.

Show Time Slots

Different time slots at the Comedy Spot serve different purposes and feature different show lengths.

- **Thursdays @ 8PM (with some 7PM slots available)**- Independently produced shows produced by community members just like you!
 - Shows can be anything- improv, sketch, standup, or even Weird Strange Bizarre Comedy Fest style shows like Bizarro Baggage and Dear Diary. Have fun! Explore! Do something different.
 - Shows are 25 minutes long and shared with another show in one hour time slots. Some shows on Thursdays may be 55 minutes long to accommodate show formats that need more time.
 - Shows must end at 7:55PM if they start at 7PM and must end by 8:55PM if they start at 8PM. The Stage Tech may alter these start and end times to accommodate operations and fans.
 - Some shows may receive special permission, *prior* to the show date, for longer show lengths. This must be arranged in advance with the Executive Director.
 - **Note:** While some shows that are produced on Thursday nights may be asked to move to a Friday or Saturday night Main Stage slot, Thursdays are not a guaranteed path to being a Main Stage Show. Shows that have started on Thursdays and moved to Main Stage time slots have a unique voice, draw an audience, and have consistent quality.
- **Fridays - 7:30 PM or 9PM & Saturdays - 7PM, 8PM, or 9PM (Main Stage Shows)**

- These time slots are a mixture of independently produced (Lady Business/ Murder, You Wrote) and Comedy Spot produced (Camp Comedy Spot, Halloween Show) shows.
 - These time slots may also feature special out-of-town groups or standup comedians.
 - These shows have proven they can draw fans, have consistent quality, and have wide appeal.
 - These shows are booked by the Executive Director laugh@saccomedyspot.com
 - These shows are 45-55 minutes long.
 - Some 9PM shows may exceed 55 minutes with prior approval.
 - Be sure to verify the show start time and length, with the Executive Director, in advance.
 - It's important to conclude your show on time so that employees can reset the showroom and open doors for the next show, or allow employees to close out at the end of night.
- **Saturdays - 10:00 PM** - Independently produced shows just like the shows on Thursday nights (See above).
 - Shows can be anything- improv, sketch, standup, or even Weird Strange Bizarre Comedy Fest style shows like Bizarro Baggage and Dear Diary. Have fun!
 - Keep in mind, it's later at night, so if you request this time slot your show should have late night vibes and be able to hold an audience's attention.
 - Sometimes it's tough to get people to stay after shows or come out and see a show at 10:00PM. But it's the perfect time slot to experiment and try something really weird. Sometimes it will just be performers in the audience. GREAT. Let it rip.
 - Shows at this time slot should not exceed 25 minutes, unless you have permission from the Executive Director *in advance*.
 - Fans who attend shows at this time slot are able to see the show for FREE if they have purchased tickets to earlier shows on the same night.
 - Sometimes the Comedy Spot will schedule special shows or activities at this time slot.
 - 10PM shows start at 10PM or 5 minutes after the 9PM show concludes. 10PM shows may be delayed up to 10 minutes.

SCHEDULING AND REHEARSAL

Let's make this show the best we can make it! Let's rehearse and get this thing on stage. Here is what you need to know!

Rehearsal

Your group can rehearse at the Comedy Spot Training Center located at 915 T Street. Contact Tina Jett for more information and availability, via Facebook Messenger or email:

tina@saccomedyspot.com

Scheduling your Show at the Comedy Spot

New and returning independent shows are scheduled two months in advance every month.

<https://saccomedyspot.com/submit/>

Adara Plum schedules shows for Thursday Nights using information from the submission form.

You can reach her directly with questions at adara@saccomedyspot.com

Time slot availability varies each month depending on our Class Performance schedule.

We try to schedule each show several times to work out the friction points.

Your show may receive notes from the Executive Producer or someone designated by the Executive Director. All notes are intended to help your show improve. Please consider incorporating those notes into your next show

Continued scheduling decisions are at the discretion of Adara Plum and the Executive Director, and are based on show quality, consistency, and ability to draw an audience.

For all shows, we request that if you perform that show in a month at the Comedy Spot that you do not perform in that same month with that team at another venue.

Again, being scheduled on a Thursday does not guarantee that your show will eventually be booked on a Friday or Saturday night. But you may reach out to Brian Crall directly to pitch your show at a main stage time slot by emailing laugh@saccomedyspot.com

You may also contact Brian directly to schedule a show at 10PM. We have limited 10PM time slots. Independent shows are scheduled almost exclusively on Thursdays.

laugh@saccomedyspot.com

COMEDY SPOT AI USAGE POLICY

Use of AI for Written Material

The Sacramento Comedy Spot promotes and values creativity and the development of original content. As detailed below, producers, performers, and students should not use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to write content for use in Comedy Spot classes or shows. "AI" includes ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and other generative AI tools. For the purposes of this policy "content" refers to any comedic material submitted, pitched or performed as part of a class or show. See below for examples of acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI.

Unacceptable Uses of AI for Written Material

Producers, performers, and students should not use AI for writing or re-writing the content of any material that will be used in a class or show at the Comedy Spot, including content for any:

- Sketches or scripts
- Standup jokes or sets
- Comedic presentations
- Jokes used in sketchprov shows
- Any other pre-written material

Examples of unacceptable AI prompts

- “Write a 3-minute comedic sketch about a person meeting their in-laws for the first time.”
- “Re-write the following joke in the style of Jerry Seinfeld: [...]”
- “Write a 6-paragraph comedic presentation arguing that capybaras are the best animals.”
- “Re-write the following script in the style of Jane Austen: [...]”
- “Write 5 jokes about Baskin Robbins in the style of a comedy roast.”
- “Write 10 puns about trees.”

Acceptable Uses of AI for Written Material

- Generate or brainstorm basic lists.
- Generate or edit show or team names or descriptions.
- Generate or edit promotional materials.
- Generate or edit administrative materials, communications, or other written materials that will not be used in shows.

Examples of acceptable AI prompts

- “Give me 10 awkward locations for a first date.”
- “Give me 5 facts about capybaras.”
- “Summarize the 7 main points in this article about capybaras: [link]”
- “Write 3 ideas for the title of a sketch comedy show about British royalty.”
- “Write a catchy 3-sentence description for an improv show based on action movie tropes.”
- “Shorten the following show description to 300 characters: [...]”

Use of AI for Images, Video, or Audio

The Comedy Spot values the skill, creativity, and original work of graphic designers, visual artists, film and video creators, photographers, actors, voice actors, and other creators and artists.

- As a general rule, AI *may* be used sparingly to alter, edit, and add to existing images, video, or audio for use in Comedy Spot classes, shows, or promotions.
- AI should *not be used* for the creation of new images, video, or audio for use in Comedy Spot classes or shows.
- Do not generate new AI content that simulates or mimics the voice, likeness, or persona of Comedy Spot staff, students, or performers, or other real individuals.
- Before using AI to alter the voice or image of Comedy Spot staff, students, or performers, or other real individuals, you must have explicit permission from the individual.

AI Disclaimers in Show Descriptions

Any show that substantially uses AI-generated or AI-altered content in the show, the show description on the Comedy Spot website must include a note or mention to that effect.

- **Examples**
 - “Part of this Game show features a game called, guess that AI prompt where AI generated images are shown to comedians and they have to guess the prompt that created them.”

- “A team of human improv performers make up scenes based on jokes written by AI.”

If you have questions about the AI Usage Policy or wish to request an exception, please contact the Executive Director at laugh@saccomedyspot.com

Performers and staff are encouraged to provide feedback and raise concerns about the use of AI at the Comedy Spot.

COMEDY SPOT ETIQUETTE AND EXPECTATIONS

Please take a moment to read our [Performer Policies and Etiquette](#) document before performing at the Comedy Spot.

VIDEO INTROS, SHOW ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND COLD OPENINGS

We have found that if you start your show with a couple of announcements things seem to go smoother.

- **Show Intro** - let the audience know what they are about to see. Example: “This is the cast of Anti-Cooperation League, tonight we will be asking you, the audience, to share your stories, and then we are going to turn your stories into comedy scenes.” You can also make a couple of announcements like these to help the audience know what we expect of them:
 - Please put your cell phone on silent.
 - Please don’t heckle, talk to your friends, or the comedians during the show. Yelling at performers during a show is a little weird, and whispering in the darkness freaks us out. Round of applause, can we all agree to that?
- **Cold Openings** - If your show starts with a sketch or bit, and you are not able to talk to the audience, you might consider coming out on stage a few minutes before the show starts and sharing the same announcements as above. We had a packed house for a variety show that started with an amazing interactive sketch. The audience was loud and fun before the show started. The sketch asked the audience to interact with the character. It was a great bit. But the audience talked through the entire show because they thought that’s what they were supposed to be doing.
- **Intro Videos** - We are encouraging all shows to develop a show intro that sets the tone for the show. Here are two very different examples:
 - Murder, You Wrote Intro: https://youtu.be/v7jOb63I_0U
 - The Midnight Show: <https://vimeo.com/13713922>

COMEDY SPOT MISSION AND VALUES

The Comedy Spot was born out of a desire to provide a home to comedians who felt alienated by conventional comedy clubs. What initially served as a sanctuary for improv, sketch comedy,

and stand-up grew into a place where every misfit comedian can find acceptance, encouragement, and support; a place to create and thrive, where outcasts are celebrated.

Our mission is to provide a third space, beyond home and work/school where people can connect to one another, escape adulthood, be creative, and celebrate each others' diverse backgrounds and stories. Sacramento Comedy Spot is a community that celebrates otherness and aims to connect people through comedy classes, shows, and events. We want to inspire students and performers to challenge themselves, make a statement, and tell their story through comedy.

The fundamental principles of the Comedy Spot revolve around our students, performers, and fans. We want to give our students support and a place to learn and thrive. We want to empower performers to express themselves authentically. We want to provide fans with not just exceptional comedy performances, but unforgettable experiences. We endeavor to develop shows and classes that resonate with a wide spectrum of audiences, embracing diverse backgrounds and narratives.

As a general rule and reminder, we trust you all with your individual creativities and talents, and trust that no performances contain any themes of misogyny, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or disrespect to historically marginalized groups.

Those performers and show creators that are intentionally hurtful, who think that misogyny, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or disrespecting historically marginalized groups is okay, or "just part of comedy" will never, and have never, had a home at the Comedy Spot.

Most of the time when people do something on stage that you don't agree with, is hurtful, or in bad taste, they are not trying to be malicious or intentionally hurtful. Have meaningful, truthful, empathetic conversations about content with performers and show creators. It will make us all better and promote trust and support.

Take care of each other both on and off stage. The Comedy Spot is a community of amazingly talented and good people. Celebrate, respect, and encourage diversity and individuality.

Be humble. Seek out and consider notes and feedback. Be okay with failing. Learn from, and admit your mistakes and failures. It will make you a better performer and show creator. At the same time, believe in yourself and your show and work with people that support you and your vision.

I have made a ton of mistakes over the years and good people have talked to me and given me feedback about how I can do better. I listen, and strive to be better each time I perform or produce a show. (Brian Crall here by the way.)

If you ever want to discuss anything at the Comedy Spot we will always make time for you. You will never be punished for coming forward with concerns. All you have to do is email, text or call Brian and set up a meeting. laugh@saccomedyspot.com (916) 402-4757 (Cell)

If you are not comfortable talking with Brian or another leader at the Comedy Spot please

submit anonymous feedback using the Anonymous Suggestion Box on our Community Portal by going to saccomedyspot.com/community Password: community