

UNIT

How to set up a Music Bootcamp

Summary

The unit “How to set up a Music Bootcamp” aims to help anyone who wants to organize such a type of event to think about several fundamental aspects of its organization and development process. It should contribute to clarify the importance of responding to some essential aspects of a music bootcamp preparation and implementation as well as to provide tools that can help create the best experience possible both for participants and promoters.

SUBUNITS

1. **First questions: Where we are and where do we want to go?**
2. **Fundamental steps to set up a music bootcamp**
3. **From paper to practice: Before, during and after the bootcamp**

Key competences

Hard skills

For promoters:

Instruments to activate and implement complex music projects.

Understanding all the fundamental phases of an event implementation and management

Soft skills

For promoters:

Organization skills

Communication

Team work

Collaboration

Communication

Networking

Resilience

Improvisation

Creativity

Level of difficulty

Medium / Hard

Duration

Time of preparation - Between three weeks and three months, depending on the scale and goals of the event

Who can implement this unit

Any youth worker, music producer, event promoter. Depending on the type of promoter, you might need to recruit specialized teams to support the production and implementation of the event. For some activities and depending on the goals you define, you might also want/ need to involve City or Town Hall staff and/ or other profiles that might still be relevant . You will need trainers, music experts and other artists and specialized staff for particular activities, depending on the program you design.

Didactic methodology

Collaborative learning, brainstorming.

Learning outcome

This unit is exclusively for bootcamp promoters. They will be able to understand all the processes and important aspects to consider when organizing a music bootcamp. They can also use knowledge from other units of this module in the preparation of their bootcamp.

Evaluation criteria

Most activities in music bootcamps should be held in groups. Promoters/trainers can evaluate the bootcamp participants by their capacity to:

- Play in an orchestral context;
- Manage self control during performance;
- Keep motivation and commitment;
- Socialize with their peers during and between activities;
- Collaborate with other participants;
- Take good care of their own musical instrument and those of others;
- Engage and enjoy activities during the event;
- Be creative and proactive.

1. First questions: *Where we are and where do we want to go?*

Before beginning to set up a bootcamp, trainers must know what is the main goal of the event. As an intensive practice that takes place over a short period of time and is able to combine a wide range of leisure activities, music bootcamps are perfect to explore activities and methods that people usually don't have the opportunity to try in a regular training environment. Bootcamps are ideal to provide a general and enriching learning about different themes related to music, such as the various stages of music and artistic production, construction of instruments, working as a large music ensemble, and so on. The possibilities are unlimited: from sessions about directed improvisation or how to promote and communicate a band, to workshops about scenography and stage design. These are events that allow participants to have a complete music educational experience, based on different methods and forms of organization.

Here are the first 5 questions that any promoter should must answer before starting a music bootcamp:

1. Why do you want to organize a music bootcamp?
2. Who is your target audience?
3. How will it enrich the lives of the participants?
4. What is your final goal with this bootcamp?
5. What makes it different from other music bootcamps?

2. Inicial fundamental steps to set up a bootcamp

A. Write your concept

Answer the following questions:

A.1. Who?

Define your target audience (and segments, whenever possible).

A.2. What?

General idea or theme. What is your music bootcamp concept? What makes it different from other equivalent experiences? In other words, what is your unique selling proposition: why would a participant choose to participate in your event instead of another.

A.3. Where?

Where will it happen? Think about venues or classrooms for the activities, accommodation for participants, places to eat, safe outdoor spaces for leisure activities, lecture facilities, free time spaces, large rooms for rehearsals. Make sure to highlight the local specificities such as landscape or cultural aspects. All of this adds to your value proposition.

A.4. When?

When will it happen and during how many days. Depending on your target audience, make sure the dates you choose do not conflict with school time or exam periods. It is also important to verify if there is any other major event that might compete or significantly disturb the expected functioning of your music bootcamp: check out for things such as local fairs, major conferences, sports competitions, political rallies, etc.

A.5. How?

Who is responsible for the organization and who are your partners. Make a list of tasks and assign them to specific groups or persons. Keep track of every front but make sure you allow team members to engage and feel part of the project too. Bootcamps are supposed to be memorable experiences and you want it to always be for the best reasons.

A.6. Why?

Write your mission and final goal and always remember it every step of the way. Make sure to remind it to your team and partners every once in a while - especially when/ if things get difficult.

A.7. Who finances your music bootcamp?

If you don't have the money you need to make all the activities, local sponsors and partnerships can be very important. National and international funds can also be an option. All these funding mechanisms help you make sure that the event is viable and of good quality, while allowing you to reduce the cost for participants and hence reach bigger audiences.. Note: it is very important to limit the number of participants. Although it might be tempting to include as many people as possible, having too many participants might make some of the activities impossible or less interesting to perform. Again, always keep in mind that the goal is for everyone to have a good time, not contributing to any discomfort or frustration.

A.8. Who is part of your team?

Make sure you gather a competent and motivated team. You will not only need people to be in charge of the organization and production, communication and design, but also people to guide educational and leisure activities, music trainers and staff to supervise and support all participants and stakeholders at all moments (note that some of these functions can overlap; depending on the scale of the event, you might not need a specific worker for every particular function).

3. From paper to practice: Before, during and after the event

Before the event, think about:

A. Activities

Choose and plan your activities! Check the unit "[Essential activities for Music Bootcamps](#)" to find some ideas.

B. Resources and partnerships

Think about all the resources and partnerships you need to make your bootcamp happen. Some tips:

1. If you are doing something with local impact, try to have the support of your City Hall. It will be a great help for logistics, licences and permits, provision of public spaces, liaison to other local partners, etc.
2. Make partnerships or agreements with local institutions which can provide spaces and classrooms for the students, transportation, a cafeteria or space for meals and accomodation for student and teachers, local products, etc.

C. Meals and Snacks

1. Pay attention to special care when preparing meals and snacks. It is very important that the organization is aware of possible food restrictions the participants may have. You

should also provide healthy snacks often, besides a menu with diversified and healthy meals. The quality of the catering service is determinant. If people don't have their basic needs fulfilled, if the food is not tasty, if there isn't enough water, if spaces are too cold (or too hot), all these things can ruin an event, regardless of the quality of the programme and guests.

D. Schedule

When preparing the bootcamp schedule, have in consideration the following aspects:

1. Organize a good and balanced schedule of activities, both in terms of the daily programme and throughout the whole duration of the bootcamp. Make sure to leave some free time for participants to practice on their own, socialize or get to know the area as they please.
2. Prepare a complete schedule with diverse activities, but remember that participants also need breaks and time to rest. Activities for team building are very important especially at the beginning of the event. Group meals, picnics, outdoor sports and games or nature walks are some of the things you can include in your schedule.
3. Make sure everyone (participants, staff and partners) know the schedule. It is good they are aware of the activities they will be participating in so they can be autonomous in the way they organize their own time and engagement. This should give them a greater sense of responsibility and commitment. Nevertheless, staff and trainers should always be available to help and/ or guide participants. .

[Suggested example of a music bootcamp schedule.](#)

E. Communication

Communication is essential to promote your bootcamp, both to create value and to clarify that same value. It is a set of tools that will help the event reach a greater number of participants or potential customers, according to the defined target audience. There are 5 essential steps to go through to make a good promotion:

1. Identify the target audience

It is important to always have a specific target audience in mind. In certain cases we can include who will pay the registration and/ or will have the final decision (parents or guardians), and those who influence the purchase (in the case of a bootcamp aimed for participants under 18). We have to think about where our target audience is mainly located: Do they use the internet? Which media do they consult? Printed or online? Are there specialized journalists or bloggers we could reach? What about display and outdoor communication? Defining the target audience will affect our decisions: what will be said, when it will be said, where it will be said and how it will be said.

2. Define communication goals

After defining the target audience, it is important to define our communication goals. The goal is to get them to know our bootcamp better. If the target audience already knows

about it (this is the case when the event has had previous editions), the aim is to raise interest and give them all the necessary information to get to the final phase, which will be registering for the bootcamp and paying the registration fee. According to each of the phases, there are different types of communication tools that can be used.

When we start promoting our event, we should bet on a campaign that presents it well, making our proposition clear: communicate fundamental things like what are the activities, the duration, the trainers, etc. We should meet our audience, both in physical and digital places. After the initial promotion, we should continue to feed our content and innovate in terms of communication strategies. We can, for example, release a video with a testimony of someone who has participated in a previous edition, or, if it is the first edition, record a video of one of the trainers talking about some specific characteristics of the event and explaining why it is unique.

We must also have a place to gather (and archive) all the important information to be transmitted about our event. For this, a website will be ideal.

3. Message

The message must be suitable for our target audience, it must be capable of raising interest, desire, and finally action (in this case, the registration in the event). For this we need to think about two aspects:

- What to say? Message content

Rational, emotional or moral appeal. In the case of the bootcamp, what makes more sense is the emotional appeal, since it is an educational service where something is going to be taught. We should highlight key information about the event and testimonials or content that appeals to this emotional side, which makes people want to participate or sign up someone close to them.

- How to say it? Message structure and format

It is important to balance the content and arguments of our message, and always highlight key information first. To conclude, in the case of an event, a strong call to action (statement about the bootcamp followed by a question leading to action) works well, for example: "This will be your best week! Have you signed up yet?".

Regarding the format, we can use several tools and formats, but they all have something in common: it is essential to attract the attention of future participants and, if they are minors, their parents or guardians. Use a good design, good photographs and eye-catching titles, strong and attractive colours (that allow easy reading), movement, among other elements that a good image should convey. The important thing is to make the message distinctive, different and attractive to our target audience.

4. Choose the channels/platforms

It is essential to decide the communication channels/platforms we will use to get our message across and promote our event. We can divide the communication channels between:

- Personal communication channels
They allow personal contact and direct feedback from our audience. Personal communication channels involve direct person-to-person interaction, whether face-to-face, by phone, email or instant message.
- Nonpersonal communication channels
It involves media channels and platforms that can communicate our message, but without personal contact. It includes printed and digital mass media (newspapers, magazines, journals, blogs), broadcast media (television, radio), display media (billboards, posters, leaflets...), and other online media (websites, social media, email marketing, newsletters,...).
Nowadays, there are many free tools at our disposal, and others that are very effective at a low cost. It is important to adapt our budget to the communication channels we are going to use. Some good practices for promoting a youth event at local level are:
 - Create social networks suitable for the age group we want to attract. Invest in paying for promotions on social networks, directed at our target audience, taking into account age, region, interests, among other indicators.
 - Create a good website that gathers all the information about the event (description, programme, schedules, trainers, registration process, among others).
 - Promote in the media: local or national radio and newspapers, online or offline, are the easiest way to publicise an event in the print and broadcast media. Make a press release and send it to specialized media (see module "[Band Acceleration, Management and Entrepreneurship](#)", unit "[How to promote your band on media](#)", which gives some insights about how to write a press release and how to contact specialized media, the content can be adapted to the context of an event promotion situation).
 - Street advertising: Although online presence is increasingly important, we cannot forget that display media is also very important. We can spread posters, billboards and flyers in strategic places (for example: city centre, bars and coffee shops, near schools or spaces frequented by young people, cultural associations, among others).

The important thing is to understand that we really have to have a well-defined target audience, and then develop content and choose the means of communication accordingly.

5. Message source

The source by which we convey our message is very important. Someone with credibility in the area will be more easily listened to when it comes to opinions about a certain product/service.

If we publicise our event through a respected institution, association or organisation that already has its followers, this will add value and give credibility to our event. This is also why promoters are increasingly resorting to using the opinion/recommendation of public figures in communication. Make sure to work on the development of your local, national and international networks (partners, funders, alumni...) and define a solid outreach strategy.

In the case of bootcamp, if there has been a previous edition, the testimony of a student who already has a music career or some recognition in the area can work well, showing that the event can have a positive influence on the lives of participants. If it is the first edition, we can bet on the same type of recommendation, but from someone involved in the project, like one of the trainers (in case it is a well-known musician or artist, for example).

6. Collect feedback

Once the communication strategy has been applied, it is important to understand its effectiveness. Was the message appropriate for the target audience? Did the audience understand the language and the project? Were the media appropriate? It is crucial to measure the performance of our communication strategy. If we notice early on that our strategy (or specific campaign) is not working (by measuring, for example, the level of interaction on social media, visits to our website, new followers, the number of registrations), we can always try to improve it. There is nothing like testing things to understand if our approach is effective.

To evaluate our communication strategy we can, for example, at the time of registration, ask some questions about where participants found out about the event or how easy was the registration process or even what motivated them to register (ex-ante survey). We can also collect this feedback at the end of the event (ex-post survey), through a satisfaction questionnaire with several parameters, including questions about the communication in general (before, during and after the event), to try to understand if our strategy was adequate or not.

Make a complete communication plan having in consideration all the materials, platforms and timings of the event (before, during and after). Hire a good communication team including communication manager, photographer, designer, professionals specialized in social media and press relations or even a digital marketing service, if necessary.

F. Registration

Have a simple registration process. It can be embedded in your website or you can create a simple online registration method, using Google Forms, Type Form or other online survey tools.

See more exemples here:

[10 Best Survey Tools: Create Awesome Surveys For Free!](#)

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Make it short but make sure you collect all the essential information:

1. Name
2. Contacts (email and mobile/ phone number)
3. Address
4. Age
5. Gender (male, female, non binary)
6. Nationality
7. Instrument
8. Level of music knowledge
9. Food restrictions
10. Next to keen contact
11. Other: Accommodation necessities, type of participation in the event (if there is more than one)
12. Open question for doubts/ comments/ suggestions.

You will probably also have to prepare a formal document for parents or legal guardians to sign, saying they authorise the participation in the activities. In this document, make sure to ask permission from the parents or legal guardians to take pictures and videos of the participants during the event, explaining the ends to which they will be used for (archive, reports, promotion of future editions...). If anyone objects, be careful when choosing pictures and videos for communication, so that you don't expose anyone who doesn't have that permission. The event's photographer/ videographer should always be aware of this list of permissions/ objections.

G. Price

You may need to fix a registration fee. If you want to offer the registration fee to students with economic difficulties, try to find partners willing to sponsor scholarships. In exchange, you can advertise them in your communication and invite their representatives to special sessions (such as concerts or open rehearsals), giving visibility to the entities or companies that are sponsoring your event. You can also offer a final concert in their headquarters/ premises (if applicable; for example, in the case of local/ regional partners).

H. Budget

Make a budget for your event according to the expenses you can predict. If you find it easier, you can always make a budget for each one of the activities that needs one (from production to programme). The budget is one of the first tasks to work on and it should include all the costs and revenues you can anticipate. Don't forget to save some money for unpredictable costs (about 10% over the overall budget). This is a fundamental document to help you organise the management of your bootcamp.

During the event, think about:

I. Stick to your schedule

If you have a good schedule, just try to stick to it. Nevertheless, be flexible if some activity has to be postponed or slightly altered - there are always unpredictable situations. The event must be light and fun for everyone, including participants, staff, music trainers and organizers. That will be one of the keys to the bootcamp success.

J. Document the event

How can you document the event? Nowadays it's very easy to take pictures and make videos of good quality with smartphones. You can even involve participants in this process by asking them to take pictures and record short videos during the camp, while in orchestra/smaller groups/combo and during breaks. At the end all the material can be collected, selected and assembled in a sort of final product which can be worked out using some simple software. You can also share this content continuously, as the bootcamp develops, in the event's social network pages and/ or hashtags (in case of sharing it directly in the event's social network pages, make sure to have someone monitoring/ approving what goes online, specially if you are working with minors). Be careful so that your participants don't get distracted by this assignment.

Some ideas to include the participants in this process:

1. Ask students to take pictures and make videos of the activities with their phones, in a way that does not affect their performance.
2. You can try something more risky and allow participants to do a social media take over. Create some rules to make this happen in a simple and fluid way (for example, turn it into a game).
3. Lend each student or group of students a disposable camera. This is a different way to document the event, cause no one will see the pictures until they are revealed. At the end, you can have a pleasant surprise, and a lot of nice pictures to share. This can also help students to be more creative and train their ability as photographers, since they only have one chance per click, unlike digital photographs.
4. At the middle of the event, ask students to choose some pictures of the activities and make a creative mural with them, when they can also draw and write what they are liking the most about the experience.

Important note: once online, forever online. If you can't control/ monitor this online sharing process, do not promote it. Otherwise, you might see yourself and your organization involved in complicated situations. For example, if a participant chooses to post a photo of another participant whose parents had not authorized pictures in the event's social network page, you will be held accountable. On the other hand, if they choose to share it in their own social networks simply using a hashtag to identify the event, you might not be considered responsible.

K. Communication

Use your social media to show what is happening. This is a great way to keep your followers close to the event and potentially captivate future participants for future editions. It is also a

good way to show to the participants' parents what is happening, especially at young ages. Make sure to respect who has and hasn't a permission to show in images or videos of the event.

After the event, think about:

L. Document the event

Impact evaluation and feedback is very important not only to document your event and to improve in future editions but also to prepare reports for partners and funders (public or private). Prepare a simple survey and send it to the participants, with questions like:

1. How satisfied were you with the event?
2. Do you feel that you evolved as a musician?
3. From 1 to 5, how much did you like activity X?
4. From 1 to 5, how satisfied were you with the food?
5. From 1 to 5, how satisfied were you with the accommodation?
6. ...

Note: You can easily set up this survey in a survey online tool. You can use different types of questions (scale, multiple choice, short or long answer, multiple choice grid, among others). Make the survey as simple as possible and quick to answer.

Short video interviews to participants and trainers might also be interesting for reports and future promotion teasers.

Don't forget your team feedback. It is very important you understand what your team thinks about how the event went. You can schedule a meeting to talk about this or set up a survey, with questions like:

1. From 1 to 5, how do you think the event went?
2. What do you think went better?
3. What do you think went worst?
4. How do you think we can improve in future editions?
5.

Find more about impact evaluation here:

[EUROPEANA IMPACT PLAYBOOK](#)

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M. Communication

Once the event is over, you will have plenty of material you can use to talk about what happened. Write about it on your website or share some pictures of the activities. If you have some videos, you can make a video-resume of the event. It is very important to keep communicating with your audience, in order to grab their attention for other activities or future events.

