

Ten Commandments of Career Success

10. *Thou shalt know thyself.* Know your strengths as well as the areas that need work. Know what you actually have to offer the professional world. You need an accurate assessment in order to create realistic goals. Is there a market for your talents here in Boston? Perhaps elsewhere?
9. *Thou shalt know thy market, thy industry.* Know what the competition is for the kind of work you'd like and what types of work musicians at your level are finding. Know what kinds of performance-related work musicians do as well, and the skills needed for this work.
8. *Thou shalt schmooze.* "Networking" is not just something for business people in suits. Get to know the people who are doing what you'd like to do. Find out how they got started. Be interested and interesting.

Start with the people you know well: friends, teachers, colleagues. Ask these people who else you should speak with. Ask for feedback and advice on your job search strategy.

Social meetings and concerts are great for increasing your network. Also, use informational interviews — networking appointments to develop new contacts (there's a handout on this topic at the Career Services Center).

You may want to join professional associations or a membership organization, attend conferences, meetings: there are national organizations for chamber musicians, music teachers, musicologists, as well as one for almost every instrument — many of these have newsletters and/or annual conferences. Find out about these at the Career Services Center.

7. *Thou shalt research thine options.* Read other musicians' bios — find out what grants, competitions, festivals would be helpful for your future and APPLY. The Career Services Center has much of the info on these opportunities. Also read local newspapers — read who is playing where, discover performance opportunities /possible contacts. Read the journals relating to your area — available in Spaulding Library. Information leads to opportunities; Information is power.
6. *Thou shalt cultivate an attitude:* positive, resilient, flexible, professional. Keep your ego in check. You need to be able to deal well with rejection as well as acceptance.
5. *Thou shalt think like an entrepreneur.* Use some of the imagination and creativity you bring to your music-making, to the business side of your art. There may be career opportunities: concert series, after-school arts programming, or innovative partnerships with other performing, presenting, or educational organizations you can create or help develop.

Most professional musicians work in a variety of genres, formats — their careers are "segmented" to include performing, teaching and often other areas as well. You need to think like an entrepreneur in order to put together a total "package" of various types of work that you'll find stimulating and profitable.

Schedule time each week to work at the business side of your art. Research and networking take time. You'll also need time to find concert series presenters, places to perform, and *you'll* probably be the one to negotiate the contract, arrange the publicity, hang the posters, write the press release, and plan the reception. (Unless your mother will do this for you). If you don't make the time for all this, it won't happen.

4. *Thou shalt have a gimmick.* By offering something truly unique, such as particular period repertoire or arrangements of particular works, you may be able to "niche market" yourself or your ensemble to presenters and the press who may be drawn to your particular specialization.

You should be very clear about what sets you apart from other musicians — what your specific individual distinguishable gifts are. In order to convince the public to hear your concerts, conductors to hire you as a soloist, and schools to hire you to teach, you need to be able to convey that you offer something unique, exceptional — something they want.

3. *Thou shalt look to thine interpersonal skills. Clean up thine act.* We are all human. Face it, we're all dysfunctional; so get the help you need so that you don't inflict your personal difficulties on others. The more you can be at ease with yourself and with others, the more you can benefit from and appreciate the world you inhabit. Make sure you are contributing positively to a healthy working and living lifestyle.

The music industry is very much a small world and is relationship driven. The person you snub today may be the person who doesn't recommend you tomorrow. Make sure you are a good colleague. Be considerate, polite, and helpful. What goes around, comes around.

2. *Thou shalt have both short-term and long-term goals.* Goals are dreams with deadlines. The trick is to use your goals as motivational tools and guides. Your short-term goals, for the semester, for the year, for this week, will help to keep you focused and insure your progress towards your ultimate, long-term goals. Keep your goals in sight, but don't let them strangle you — your goals need to be flexible enough so that you can respond to the changing market and the range of opportunities that may come your way.
1. *Thou shalt feed thy soul.* This means taking care to remind yourself often why you got involved in music in the first place. Your most basic motivations for being in music are crucial factors in keeping you moving forward in your career. Your motivation, your beliefs in what music is all about and what it means to you personally will help sustain you throughout your professional life.