Module 2 Event Planning and Management
2.2 EVENT FACILITIES AND TECHNICAL PREPARATION COORDINATION cont.

4. Monitor event facilities and technical equipment set up

What is a technical specification?

For our purposes, a technical specification (or tech spec) is a document outlining all the necessary technical information of a facility or band. It may also refer to documents relating to equipment, although this is out of the scope of this article.

A venue may provide a tech spec detailing all of the equipment in use in the venue, as well as relevant issues such as power location / rating, stage dimensions, wing space *etc.* It may also include venue diagrams and rigging information. This will typically be sent out to the relevant contacts of all companies coming into a venue so that they know what to expect when they walk through the door.

A band may provide a tech spec to a promoter or venue that outlines what equipment and conditions are required for them to do their show to the highest standard. This will typically include preferred audio equipment, an input list, monitor list and a stage plot.

This article refers to the latter, the document provided by a band to a promoter, often referred to as a technical rider.

What to include

The tech spec will probably be the first impression that you make, and as such, should be composed in a manner that <u>conveys</u> (传达) your experience, <u>capability</u> (能力) and <u>professionalism</u> (专业精神).

The most important rules to follow when composing a technical specification are:

- *Keep it simple*
  You may be an artistic kind of person, but leave it out for another time. Don't use pictures downloaded from the Internet and fancy clipart. Instead, simple symbols with a legend are more than adequate. These documents need to be clear, easy to read (often on a dark stage) and photocopy-able, which means black & white only.

- *Put all the relevant details on every page*
  Venues and hire companies receive hundreds of riders and tech specs. Ensure that they know who and when your rider is for with the name of the act, the date or range of dates it is valid and relevant contact details on every page. This means that you are still contactable should they lose the last page. An expiry date will reveal without doubt whether the document is in or out-of-date.

- *Ensure that it is correct and up-to-date*
  While it is entirely possible that your spec may change significantly between the time you sent out the rider and when you turn up at the gig, ensure it is as up-to-date as possible when sent out. Always carry a few hard copies of the very latest version so that when you turn up at the gig and find that they have an old copy, you can immediately give them an up-to-date version. Also, make sure you don't contradict yourself *e.g.* marking the lead vocal as channel 25 on the input list and channel 31 on the stage plot.

- *A tech spec is not a substitute for advancing a show*
  Even though you have sent out your rider, don't assume that it will be followed to the letter, and it often won't. It may not even arrive in the hands of the right person! Phone the audio provider 1-2 weeks before the show and make sure that everything is on track and they know all the relevant information (which should be written down in the spec). Request a spec from them of what will be provided and make sure that it is adequate to run your

show. They'll probably have some questions for you too. Unless you're mixing the biggest shows in the world, you will never get exactly what you want all of the time and compromises must be made.

Equipment Spec

The equipment spec should include the preferred equipment you require to present the show to the highest standard, which can include console preferences, outboard preferences, speaker/monitor preferences and anything else you require. It should include things that are vital(重要) to your show *e.g.* if you require 8 sets of in-ear monitors provided, this should be stated here.

Please note that these documents can be treated in a very different way depending on the providers, some of which think that they are no more than equipment wish lists for engineer's playtime. The best way to avoid this situation is to be reasonable in your requests and to present yourself as knowledgable and competent. Just because it's written in your tech spec does not mean that it's going to be at the show. This is just one reason why you should advance the show with a phone call, to make sure that the equipment that will actually be provided will be capable of running your show, let alone meet the spec!

Channel List

The purpose of a channel list is to inform the audio provider how many inputs you require, what they consist of, what your preferred microphones are and where you require inserts. From this, they can make an informed decision when picking microphones / stands and cables from their warehouse stock.

If you are carrying any of your own gear, make it clear. It's frustrating and a waste of money for everyone involved when the provider hires in a full mic kit to find that the tour carries all their own mics.

Columns such as '+48V' and 'Polarity' are superfluous. Your local audio crew should know which microphones require phantom power, and polarity is something for the mix engineer to do, just like turning up the gain or an EQ pot. Also, don't label channels with people's

Channel List Example

names (unless their name is on the poster), but rather their role in the band. This will make it easier for the house crew to differentiate, they don't need to learn everyone's names. Simplicity and clarity is key.


Monitor List Example

Monitor List

A monitor list should show how many monitor mixes are required on stage, what order they should be patched and what kind of output each mix requires (wedge, IEM, XLR). These should correspond with the stage plot. It can also show whether the buses are to be configured mono or stereo.

Stage Plot

The stage plot is a diagram of the stage to show where each performer will be, where your backline will be, what risers you require, where the channels (referenced from the channel list) should appear, where you require backline power and where you require monitor mixes. You should mark the front of stage, stage right and stage left to remove any doubt.

Electronic v Paper

Computers are obviously a large part of our lives today, and together with the internet make the whole process of sending information across the globe much easier. However, when sending documents via e-mail, they should be sent in Adobe PDF format. The reason is that it is a universal format that will render the same on any computer, regardless
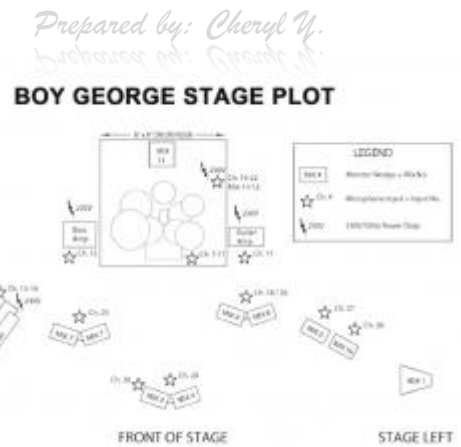
Example Stage Plot

of format or age, unlike Word or Excel files where you must rely on the recipient having a copy of Microsoft Office or compatible.

On an Apple computer, PDFs can be created easily from any document after selecting Print. On the PC, it is necessary to use a utility such as Cute PDF or one of the other multitude of freeware programs.

As convenient as computers are, always make sure that you are carrying a couple of hard copies of the entire spec to clarify any issues on the gig (一场演出).

As a final note, a tech spec is a necessary way to convey what is required for a gig, but it is not a substitute for advancing a show. A quick phone call 1-2 weeks before an event will bring light to and help to clarify any problems that may arise due to an oversight on either parties behalf, and to make sure that there are no surprises for either party on show day.

Event non-technical equipment specification

Choose your venue carefully depending on the size of the event you are planning.   You should consider equipment and the number of people you plan to attract.

Look at the facilities at your venue

- Toilet provision
- Waste & Recycling facilities
- Electricity supply
- Water supply
- Fencing required
- Parking facilities
- Public transport

Decide if you need anything else to cater for the audience you hope to attract, but please remember that anything you hire will become your responsibility once it is on site and must be covered by your insurance. You need to think about these aspects early on so that you can arrange for services to be provided.

Quality of work performance

Event management is a competitive industry, and there are many different event management skills you'll need in order to thrive in your career. When your event could involve juggling live performances, technology, food service, and large groups of people — whether in-person or virtual — you'll definitely need to be ready to wear many hats.

Intrigued(很好奇)? Learn the top 10 skills an event manager should have:

1. People skills

The number one quality shared by successful event managers is people skills. You need to be comfortable connecting with high-level executives, government officials, vendors, co-workers, sponsor reps, customers, supervisors, suppliers, staff, and event attendees. To successfully work with this wide range of people, you'll need to be able to nimbly resolve conflicts, be a confident but pleasant negotiator, and maintain your sense of humor.

Remember — try to have fun with the work you do, and the people you work with, and they'll want to work with you again. You can't do it all by yourself, so building relationships is key.

2. Flexibility

Event managers often double as janitors and (metaphorical) firemen. Cleaning up messes and putting out fires — quickly, quietly, and efficiently — is part of the job. You also have to know how to pivot and organize online events when, say, a pandemic hits and venues close. Stay calm, get it done, then get back to running the show.

3. Organization

To successfully run any event, you need to be able to do about 50 things at once. This multi-tasking prowess is one of the key skills for event management, required

for both smooth planning and flawless execution of an event. The best planners have foolproof systems, step-by-step checklists, and handy tech tools. Working in events requires the ability to focus on the big picture while keeping track of all the little details. To avoid burnout, get comfortable delegating some of your more time-consuming tasks. And if things don't go according to plan, don't be afraid to switch to Plan B.

4. Listening skills

The ability to understand what key stakeholders want from your event is critical. These folks may not be in the event industry, so they might not speak the lingo or know what's realistic. You have to be able to discern their needs and make sure all parties share the same expectations. Pay attention to what's said — and what's *not* said — in key conversations. Tapping into these spoken (and unspoken) needs throughout your planning process will help you stay one step ahead.

5. Passion

With all the stress of being an event planner, it's important to really love what you do. Genuine passion helps you overcome bumps in the road and stay cool when all seems lost. It also leads to bursts of creativity and productivity, as opposed to just trying to get through the day. Things like time management can be learned, but you can't teach passion. Being an event manager can, at times, be a thankless job, so it needs to be about more than just a paycheck for you.

6. Clear communication

Clear, firm, and kind communication establishes you as a leader of the team, keeps everyone on track, and ensures that the goals of the event are clear to everyone involved. It also allows you to effectively share your vision and get other people excited about it, too. Communicate in a way that is respectful to everyone and doesn't put anyone down. Accept criticism and be open to new ideas. Everyone plays a part in the success of an event, so make sure you're communicating with them in a clear, confident, and empowering way.

7. Unflappability (镇定自若)

Your team will look to you for answers to almost everything. In moments of stress, the last thing they need is a shaky leader who makes poor decisions because they're cracking under pressure. Successful event managers stay level-headed and continue to treat everyone with respect, no matter what. Try to remain cool, calm, and collected when dealing with other people, even if you're a bundle of nerves inside.

8. Problem-solving skills

Whether it's tracking down some emergency duct tape or reworking a keynote presentation at the last minute, you have to be resourceful with what you have. No matter how well you plan, something will go wrong. And it will be a lot easier to address if you enjoy finding creative solutions to the challenges that arise.

9. Decisiveness (果断)

Event managers need to be able to make several decisions at once and make them quickly. And, perhaps more importantly, they need to be able to recognize when it's too late to change those decisions — and have the resolve to stand by them.

10. Knowledge

It will be a lot easier for people to trust you if you have a significant amount of experience because there's no better way to learn than by doing. And your job will be easier for you once you've seen the range of challenges an event can throw at you. Plus, the experienced manager has a network of trusted professionals to call on when things get tough. If you don't have a ton of knowledge yet, getting a certificate or taking a course can help get you on your way.

As you can see, being an event organizer is a demanding — and rewarding — career. If all this sounds like you were made for it, then maybe it's time for you to get started.