

Unleash Your Inner **ROCK STAR**:

7 STEPS To Taking Centre Stage

By: Dayna Steele

Every day, each one of us does the exact same thing. We wake up and put our feet down on the stage. Our stage may be different – the stage of life, business, parenthood – any number of arenas. What we choose to do on that stage will be our own unique “performance” as well. The key to making it a successful performance is confidence – walking out under the lights, in front of the crowd and *owning* that stage.

The Rolling Stones’ front man Mick Jagger had to gain confidence at some point to develop that strut. Billy Idol didn’t always have that sneer. And, Lady Gaga has developed her confidence to the point that she can now wear and do anything on stage! So, how do you gain confidence to take center stage and succeed? Preparation. When you’re prepared for anything, you have more confidence. So how do you prepare to be the rock star you know you should and can be?



Passion

First and foremost, make sure you’re doing what it is you want to do. If you aren’t, use all of the following steps to make a change. Even the best rock star job in the world has its problems and tedious moments and only passion will get you through these times. Passion makes you want to get up early and get to work. Passion gives you the energy to work harder and longer than anyone.

In addition, you have to not only do what you love but also give your fans (customers and clients) what they want; you need to feed *their* passions! It’s human nature to enjoy working with and being around people who are interested in what you’re interested in. When you indulge the passions of your fans, you develop a stronger following.

Knowledge

Keep up with your industry and the news around you. I’ve always said that I never played “Stairway to Heaven” or “Freebird” any different than any other deejay. What I did do, was read constantly and always had things to talk about and tidbits to drop in during my broadcasts. That extra work added an extra dimension of entertainment to my show and connected me to the passions of my listeners.

KISS’s Gene Simmons, one of the most successful rock stars of all time, once told an audience at a business conference that the one thing he attributes his success to, is reading. Keeping up with your industry and the world around you, not only keeps your mind sharp but also gives you the ability to recognize trends and opportunities before anyone else.

Networking

Long before I knew what networking meant, I schmoozed. After a concert, we would “hang out” backstage with the bands, the fans, the other deejays and the music reps. Relationships were formed and phone numbers were exchanged. I helped the bands by playing their music and they helped me by doing interviews on my show and giving me access backstage. It should always be a reciprocal relationship.

I met my husband because of a favor I did for David Crosby of Crosby Stills & Nash. It’s too long of a story for this article, but suffice it to say, I did something for David because it was the right thing to do. I never expected “Charlie the Wonder Husband” and our three great sons to be part of the deal!

Networking is about forming relationships and finding ways to work together on any number of projects. It's how musicians find bands and bands find record deals. Think of it this way – would you rather do business with someone you know or someone recommended by a friend, or a complete stranger? Schmooze away rock star!

Marketing

Let the world know what you do; most of us don't read minds. Bands start out in small clubs, hanging signs around town and networking on MySpace. The ones that have a chance of succeeding, have a website, a very active presence on social media sites (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter), free music downloads available online, CDs to give away, t-shirts and hats, etc. I always have copies of my book in my bag and in my car. I carry a handful of guitar pics with my information on them as business cards.

You should always have something to leave behind whether it's a business card or some other item. That's a great trick the music industry learned a long time ago when promoting music at radio stations – they left behind freebies. One of my favorites? To promote the *Spinal Tap* movie soundtrack, I was given a shiny new colander. In the movie, the band has a replica of Stonehenge on stage, but it appears in inches instead of feet because someone wrote the measurement down wrong during the planning stages. (Take my word for it, a very funny scene on the big screen.) The colander came with a note explaining that it was supposed to be a "calendar" but it too had been written down wrong in the planning stages....a brilliant play on the movie, very funny, and I still have a lovely colander.

Organization

Early on in my rock career, my mentor managed Sammy Hagar and later Van Halen. I was given a front row view into the operation of one of the biggest bands on the charts and on the road. Everything from the actual tour, to press, to marketing was planned out well in advance.

Months go into the planning and organization of tours with tour managers; they even organize and plan for the things they hope won't happen. One of the questions I'm asked most often, other than, "Did you ever meet Van Halen?" is "How do you have so much confidence in yourself and in front of others?" The short answer is: I have a plan. I know what I'm going to say. I've done my research, searching facts and figures on Google. I have contingency plans, extra batteries, and my presentation on flash cards as well as my computer. And my list goes on. When you have a plan and you're organized, I guarantee you'll have more confidence at whatever it is you do.

Appreciation

Say thank-you along the way for a job well done – to everyone – from the fans to the roadies. No matter how big or small your organization is, never underestimate the importance and the power of saying thank you. Billy Idol once played a show at

a Houston theme park breaking all attendance records along the way. As a show of appreciation, management turned on some rides at the adjacent water park at 1:00am, gave Billy and his entourage bathing suits and towels and said, "Thanks, that was amazing!" From that day forward, I realized the incredible power of gratitude, no matter who you are. I also realized that thirteen people in a water park are a lot of fun and the only way to do it!

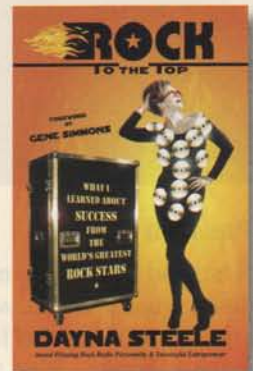
Also, never underestimate the old fashioned power of a hand written thank-you note. In this fast pace, high-tech world of emails, posts, Tweets, texts and more, a hand written thank-you note still speaks volumes. It communicates the fact that you took the time to add a personal touch and show your sincere appreciation for something. It leaves a lasting mark on the recipient.

Fun

For the most part, what all of us do in any industry is not brain surgery (unless of course you're a brain surgeon). Most of what we do is not life or death. Relax. Breathe. Rest. Eat right. Take care of yourself. And remember to enjoy the ride. You're only as happy as *you* decide you're going to be each day. Find something you love, work hard, and allow yourself to enjoy the fruits of your labor. Believe me, rock stars find ways to have fun, there's no doubt about that!

So, as you stand in the wings, waiting for your introduction, be confident in the knowledge that you're practicing the seven steps above. Close your eyes, imagine yourself in the spotlight, take a big breath and let it out slowly. Stand up straight, throw your shoulders back and walk into that spotlight at center stage. And think to yourself....

Why yes, I AM a rock star!



Dayna Steele is an entertaining motivational speaker, successful entrepreneur and author of the best-selling business book, *Rock to the Top: What I Learned About Success from the World's Greatest Rock Stars*. She travels the world helping others "Find Your Inner Rock Star!" For years, Dayna was one of the top female rock radio personalities in the USA and was known for her sultry voice, music knowledge and entertaining celebrity interviews. During her career, she was named one of the **100 Most Important Radio Talk Show Hosts** by Talkers Magazine and nominated as **Local Radio Personality of the Year** by Billboard Magazine. After leaving radio, Dayna created www.TheSpaceStore.com, the world's largest space related e-commerce venture and www.SmartGirlsRock.com, a product line to encourage girls to make "smart the new cool." She also founded www.OperationNationalAnthem.com, a series of free videos of U.S. soldiers serving in Iraq offered to venues throughout the country to play prior to the singing of our national anthem. For that, Reader's Digest named Dayna one of the **35 People Who Inspire Us** in the May 2008 issue.