B&W PRODUCTIONS · CREW TRAINING · MODULE 17

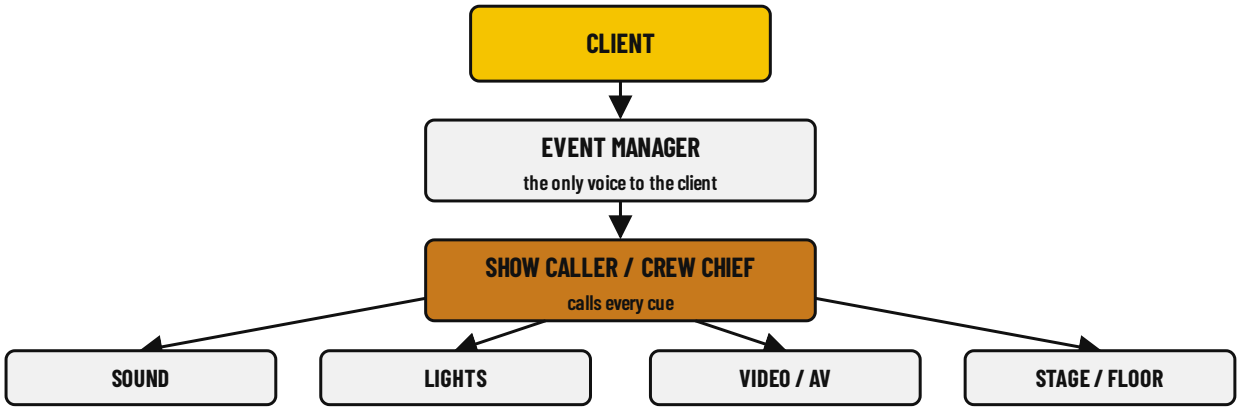
Show Day Roles and Comms

A show runs on people knowing their job and saying the right thing to the right person. Good kit with bad comms still fails in front of the client. This module covers the roles on show day, the run sheet, how cues are called, how to talk on a radio, how to behave in the room and what to do when it goes wrong.

B&W Productions · Proper Planning, Prevents Poor Performance



01 Who is who on show day



One line of command. The client talks to the event manager. The show caller calls cues. Operators do their own desk.

ROLE	OWNS
Event manager / producer	The client, the timings, every decision that changes the plan
Show caller or crew chief	Calling cues, the crew, safety on the floor
Sound (FOH)	Everything the room hears: mics, playback, levels
Lights	House lights, stage looks, follow spots
Video / AV	Screens, slides, cameras, stream
Stage / floor	Handing mics, moving lecterns, getting people on and off
Runner	Fetching, batteries, messages. The most useful person in the room.

On a small job one person wears three of these hats. The hats still exist. Know which one you are wearing when you make a call.

> **FIELD RULE**
> One boss per show. If two people give you different instructions, ask the crew chief. Do not pick the one you like.

02 The crew briefing



Ten minutes before doors, everyone hears the same plan.

Every show starts with a briefing, even a three-person job. Ten minutes. Standing up. Phones away.

1. **The show:** what it is, who the client is, what matters most to them tonight.
2. **The times:** doors, start, breaks, finish, strike.
3. **The roles:** who is on what, who covers breaks.
4. **The comms:** which radio channel, who calls cues, hand signals for when comms fail.
5. **The risks:** anything unusual. A late VIP, a surprise video, effects, weather.
6. **Safety:** exits, first aid, who is the safety contact (Module 13).
7. **Questions.** Ask now. Not during the CEO's speech.

> **FIELD RULE**
> If you missed the briefing, find the crew chief before you touch anything.

03 The run sheet



One line per moment. Everyone works from the same version.

The run sheet is the show written down, one line for every moment. Time, what happens, who is on stage, and what sound, lights and video each do.

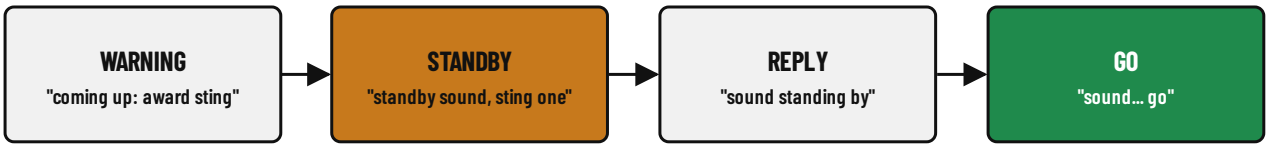
TIME	ITEM	SOUND	LIGHTS	VIDEO
18:00	Doors, guests arrive	Background playlist, low	Warm wash, house at half	Holding logo
18:40	MC welcome	MC handheld up, music out	Stage up, house down	Event title slide
18:45	CEO speech	Lectern mic, headset standby	Lectern special	CEO slides, clicker live
19:05	Award 1	Sting on cue, MC mic	Bump on the winner	Winner slide

- **One version.** The latest version number is on every page. Old copies go in the bin.
- **Mark it up.** Highlight your own cues. Write mic numbers next to names.
- **Changes go through the event manager**, then to everyone, not just the person standing closest.
- **Keep a torch and a pen.** Phone screens light up your face in a dark room.

> **FIELD RULE**
> If it is not on the run sheet, it is a surprise. Surprises are the event manager's decision, not yours.

04 Standby and go

A cue is an instruction to do one thing at one moment. Cues are called the same way every time so nobody has to think.



Standby means get your finger on it and go quiet. Go means do it now. The word "go" is only ever used for a cue.

- **On standby you stop talking.** The channel belongs to the caller.
- **You act on the word "go"**, not on the sentence before it.
- **Never say "go" on comms** unless you are calling a cue. Say "carry on" or "proceed".
- **No caller?** On small shows you take your own cues from the stage. Watch the MC, not your phone.
- **Missed it?** Do it now, cleanly, and move on. Do not explain on comms.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Standby: hands ready, mouth shut. Go: do it.

05 Radio discipline



Press, pause, speak, release. Short and clear.

1. **Think first.** Know what you will say before you press the button.
2. **Press, wait one second, then speak.** The first word is lost if you talk as you press.
3. **Who you want, then who you are:** "Sipho, Sipho, this is Thandi."
4. **Wait for "go ahead".**
5. **Say it short.** One message. What, where, what you need.
6. **Finish with "over"** if you expect an answer, or "out" if you do not.
7. **Repeat back** anything with a number, a name or a time.

SAY	IT MEANS
Go ahead	I am listening
Copy / copied	I heard and understood
Say again	Repeat your message
Stand by	Wait, I am busy
Negative / affirmative	No / yes
Radio check	Can you hear me?

TRY IT: WHO DO I TELL, AND WHAT DO I SAY?

Pick what has happened. The tool gives you who to tell and a short radio message.

REMEMBER

The radio is not private. Guests, venue staff and the client can hear it. No names of guests, no jokes, no swearing, no complaints.

FIELD RULE

If it takes more than ten seconds to say, walk over and say it in person.

06 How you look and act in the room

The client buys the show. What they remember is the crew. You are on show from the moment the first guest walks in.

DRESS

Show blacks: clean black B&W shirt, black trousers, closed black shoes. Hi-vis and boots for build and strike.

PHONES

In your pocket, on silent. No scrolling at the desk. The client sees a lit face in a dark room from across the hall.

FOOD AND DRINK

Eat in the crew area, in your break. Water at the desk in a closed bottle. No alcohol on duty, even if the client offers.

GUESTS

Polite, short, helpful. "Let me find the right person for you." You do not take song requests or give out the wifi password.

THE CLIENT

Friendly, but decisions go to the event manager. "I will get the event manager for you right now."

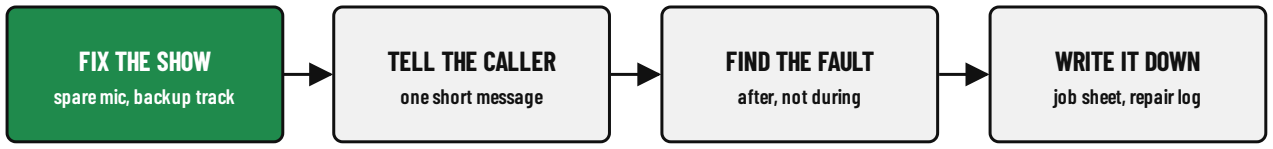
QUIET

During speeches you do not talk, laugh or move cases. If you must move, move slowly and low.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Act as if the client is standing behind you. Often they are.

07 When it goes wrong

Something goes wrong on every show. The audience forgives a ten-second problem handled calmly. They remember panic.



Keep the show running first. Diagnose later. The spare is faster than the repair.

- **Have the spare ready before you need it.** Second mic on, muted, at the side of the stage. Backup music on a second device.
- **Do not run.** Walk fast. Running tells the room something is wrong.
- **Do not blame on comms.** Fix it, report it, move on.
- **Someone hurt or in danger:** the show stops mattering. Call the crew chief and the venue, use the emergency numbers (Module 13).
- **Tell the truth after.** "Mic two died at 19:12, swapped in ten seconds, cause was a flat battery."

> **FIELD RULE**
> Calm is a skill. The crew copies whoever is calmest.

08 Handover and debrief

The last ten minutes of the job decide whether the next one goes better.

1. ☐ **THANK THE CLIENT CONTACT**
   The event manager does this. Crew stay polite and keep working.

2. ☐ **RADIOS BACK AND COUNTED**
   Batteries on charge, earpieces wiped.

3. ☐ **QUICK DEBRIEF**
   Five minutes: what worked, what broke, what to change.

4. ☐ **FAULTS WRITTEN DOWN**
   Item, what happened, when. Into the repair log.

5. ☐ **RUN SHEET AND NOTES HANDED IN**
   With real times and any client comments.

6. ☐ **VENUE SIGNED OUT**
   Room checked with the duty manager, nothing left behind.

> **FIELD RULE**
> Say what went wrong while everyone still remembers. Tomorrow it is a rumour.

09 Check what you learnt

Ten questions. Circle one answer for each. The answer key is on the last page. Pass mark: 8 out of 10.

1. **The client asks you directly to move the speeches earlier. What do you do?**

- ○ **A** Agree and change your cues
- ○ **B** Refuse
- ○ **C** Fetch the event manager
- ○ **D** Ignore it

2. **What does "standby" mean?**

- ○ **A** Take a break
- ○ **B** Get ready, go quiet, wait for go
- ○ **C** Do the cue now
- ○ **D** Switch the radio off

3. **When may you say the word "go" on comms?**

- ○ **A** Any time
- ○ **B** Only when calling a cue
- ○ **C** When leaving the room
- ○ **D** Never

4. **How do you start a radio call?**

- ○ **A** Start talking as you press
- ○ **B** Press, wait a second, say who you want and who you are
- ○ **C** Whistle
- ○ **D** Say your message twice fast

5. **What does "say again" mean?**

- ○ **A** I agree
- ○ **B** Repeat your message
- ○ **C** I am busy
- ○ **D** The show is over

6. **Why keep names of guests and complaints off the radio?**

- ○ **A** It wastes battery
- ○ **B** Guests, venue staff and the client can hear it
- ○ **C** It is too slow
- ○ **D** Radios cannot send names

7. **A mic dies during a speech. What is the first job?**

- ○ **A** Find out why
- ○ **B** Keep the show going with the spare
- ○ **C** Tell the client
- ○ **D** Stop the speech

8. **The client offers you a beer during the show. What do you say?**

- ○ **A** Yes, one is fine
- ○ **B** Thank you, not while I am working
- ○ **C** Only if the crew chief has one
- ○ **D** Later, behind the desk

9. **You missed the crew briefing. What do you do?**

- ○ **A** Start working anyway
- ○ **B** Find the crew chief before touching anything
- ○ **C** Ask a guest
- ○ **D** Read it on the radio

10. **Two people give you opposite instructions. Who decides?**

- ○ **A** The one you like
- ○ **B** The louder one
- ○ **C** The crew chief
- ○ **D** You do

Answer key

1. **C**. Changes to the plan go through the event manager, who then tells everyone.
2. **B**. Standby: hands ready, mouth shut, wait for the word go.
3. **B**. Go is reserved for cues. Use "carry on" or "proceed" for everything else.
4. **B**. Press, pause, then who you want and who you are. Wait for go ahead.
5. **B**. Say again means repeat your message.
6. **B**. Radios are not private. Assume the client hears every word.
7. **B**. Fix the show first with the spare. Find the fault afterwards.
8. **B**. No alcohol on duty, even when the client offers.
9. **B**. Get the briefing from the crew chief before you start.
10. **C**. One boss per show. Ask the crew chief.

Photos: scene photographs are AI-generated illustrations and do not show B&W Productions equipment or events. This module is crew training, not a substitute for the manufacturer's manual, the venue's rules or the event safety officer's instructions.