Open Mics Host Kit

Host your next open mic night.

Music / comedy / poetry / spoken word

A practical operating guide for restaurant, cafe and bar owners. Plan a welcoming night, keep the lineup moving, and make the next event easier.



Host scripts, schedules and 15 reusable printables.
Print only what your venue needs.

Start here

Run a small-room open mic with a clear format, a fair lineup and a predictable finish. This kit is for the venue and host; performers bring their own material.

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The starting format

Try a 90-minute mixed open mic: 12 acts, up to 4 minutes each, plus 1-minute changeovers. Reserve time for the welcome, a service break and closing. The minute-by-minute example is on page 5.

> Adapt every template before use. This is an operating toolkit, not a legal waiver, a music license, professional safety advice or a promise of attendance or revenue.

Plan your first night

Before you announce it

Choose the audience, date, room, start and finish time, age policy, sign-up method and set limit. Confirm the venue can host live performance and ask the manager to resolve permissions, sound restrictions, staffing and capacity first.

Keep the first version simple

Use one microphone and a small, tested sound system. Avoid drum kits, complex backing tracks, competitions and unplanned guest features until the team can handle them. A consistent finish matters more than fitting in one extra act.

Make four decisions together

The manager owns the room and safety. The host owns the running order. The sound lead controls the system. The floor lead protects service and access. In a small room people can combine roles, but no role should be silently unassigned.

Work backward from opening

One week out: confirm details and promote. One day out: brief staff, check equipment and print sheets. One hour out: set the room and soundcheck. Thirty minutes out: open sign-ups. Five minutes out: confirm the first three acts.

Your minimum event packet

Bring the event brief (21), opening and soundcheck lists (22-23), public sign-up (24), performer cards (25), running order (26), timing cards (27) and debrief (33). Keep private forms with the host.

Choose the format

Use one shared time limit for a mixed night. For a single-artform event, choose a limit that fits the room and announce it before sign-ups open. These are planning starting points.

Format	Suggested start	Plan around
Music	5 minutes + 2 minutes to change	Solo or duo; specify inputs and permitted instruments. A song count is not a time limit.
Comedy	4 minutes + 1 minute to change	Clear audience/content policy; no targeting unwilling guests. Keep intros brief.
Poetry or spoken word	4 minutes + 1 minute to change	A stable reading light, adjustable mic and quiet listening area. Leave room for a breath.
Mixed night	4 minutes + 1 minute to change	Rotate styles where practical; use one clock and the same warning for everyone.

Publish the boundaries

Say whether originals, covers, backing tracks, groups and adult language are allowed. State age restrictions and whether the room is family-friendly. Do not describe a night as uncensored if venue rules still apply.

Add complexity later

For full bands or multi-input acts, plan a separate music night with a capable operator and longer changeovers. Reserve any featured set in advance and show it in the running order.

Fit the acts to the clock

Example only: a 7:00-8:30 p.m. mixed night with 12 acts. Each slot contains 4 minutes of performance and 1 minute to introduce and change performers.

Time	What happens	Minutes
6:30	Sign-ups and individual check-in open	-
6:50	Close the first lineup; confirm next acts	-
7:00-7:05	Welcome, boundaries and timing signal	5
7:05-7:35	Acts 1-6: six 5-minute slots	30
7:35-7:45	Service break and equipment reset	10
7:45-8:15	Acts 7-12: six 5-minute slots	30
8:15-8:25	Recovery buffer; no promised extra slots	10
8:25-8:30	Thank performers and close	5

Calculate capacity before inviting acts

Available slot minutes = event length minus welcome, break, closing and buffer. Divide by performance plus changeover time; round down. Here: (90 - 5 - 10 - 5 - 10) / (4 + 1) = 12 slots.

For music with a 5-minute set and 2-minute changeover, the same 60 slot minutes hold 8 acts, with 4 extra minutes left. Soundcheck happens before doors, not inside every set.

> The buffer absorbs delays. If it is unused, close early or offer a clearly optional extra slot using the published waitlist rule. Never extend the venue finish without manager approval.

Give each job an owner

Manager or venue lead

Confirms capacity, age policy, any admission terms, staffing, permissions and the finish time. Owns the decision to pause or end the event and the response to a safety concern. Brief the team on exits and the venue emergency plan.

Host and timekeeper

Checks names and introductions, builds a fair order, explains boundaries and timing, and keeps transitions short. If one person does both jobs, use a visible timer and prepare cue cards before opening.

Sound lead

Checks equipment, labels channels, agrees levels with the manager and operates all changes. Performers describe what they need; they do not rewire the venue system. A sound lead needs enough skill for the equipment being used.

Floor lead

Coordinates service, watches walkways and audience comfort, and receives private concerns. They alert the manager without forcing the performer or host to manage a confrontation alone.

Agree the hand signals

One minute left: show the printed card. Time up: show the stop card. Technical pause: host holds the next introduction. Safety pause: manager directs the host to stop. Rehearse where each person will stand and how to reach backup.

If you are short-staffed

Reduce the number of acts or simplify the format. Do not assign a busy server to watch the clock, mix sound and handle a packed section at the same time.

Set the room for listening

Make one obvious performance area

Face the microphone toward listeners, with speakers in front of the microphone and pointed away from it. Leave a clear approach, stable floor area and enough space for a seated performer. Follow the equipment instructions for placement.

Protect access and exits

Keep exits, accessible routes, service paths and emergency equipment clear. Route cables away from walkways; secure crossings with suitable cable protection. Keep liquids away from electrical gear and keep the audience off the equipment area.

Give guests a real choice

If the room allows, provide a quieter area away from the loudspeaker and a clear view for people who need it. Do not promise step-free access, accessible toilets or quiet seating until someone has checked the actual route and facilities.

Coordinate food and drink service

Ask the floor lead when orders, check-ins and table clearing are least disruptive. A planned break can help, but necessary service should continue. Tell guests how to order and where to step out for a conversation.

Check the room with someone speaking

Listen from the nearest and farthest seats, the service station and any neighboring space. Aim for intelligibility at a comfortable level rather than maximum volume. The manager sets the acceptable operating limit.

Write down the result

Use the service plan on page 28. Mark the microphone, speaker, host station, performer waiting area, exits and cable routes. Recheck when furniture moves.

Bring only what you can run

Basic spoken-word setup

A reliable dynamic microphone, compatible cable, stable adjustable stand, suitable PA speaker or venue system, and the correct mixer if needed. Add a second tested microphone or spare cable, a timer, reading light and printed host packet.

Music additions

Confirm instrument connections before the event. A vocal plus acoustic instrument may need a second channel, a DI box or a second microphone. Agree power, cables, stands and any monitor needs with the sound lead. Do not promise equipment you have not checked.

Backing tracks

Decide whether you can support them. If yes, require the file and a tested playback method before sign-ups close. Use a suitable wired connection where practical, turn off notifications and confirm rights for the intended use. Do not rely on a live internet stream.

A small kit that prevents delays

Spare compatible cables, batteries where required, tape suitable for the floor, cable covers where needed, pens, a clipboard, water in a safe location, and a printed channel list. Only use power distribution approved by the venue.

Know the limits

No unapproved mains wiring, overloaded outlets, improvised repairs or mystery adapters. Stop using damaged equipment. If the setup exceeds the operator's experience, simplify the event or bring in a qualified professional.

Before shutdown

Lower outputs and follow the manufacturer's power-down procedure. Count equipment, coil cables safely and note anything damaged. The usual practice is powered speakers on last and off first; follow the actual system instructions.

Run a calm soundcheck

1 Inspect before powering up

Check stands, connectors, cables, power and the path to the microphone. Keep drinks away. Set output levels low; connect only equipment the operator understands. Follow the system's setup and power sequence.

2 Test one input at a time

Have a performer speak or sing at their expected level, with the microphone at a usable height. Set input gain without clipping, then bring the output up gradually. Do not tap or blow into the microphone.

3 Listen from the seats

Check that words are clear at the back without becoming harsh at the front. If feedback starts, reduce the relevant level first. Check speaker and microphone position; avoid pointing a live microphone at a speaker or cupping its grille.

4 Test the hardest transition

Try the instrument or backing track with the most complex setup. Label the inputs. Save or note a safe starting setting. Agree who will mute channels before plugging, unplugging or moving equipment.

5 Confirm the performer experience

Ask whether the performer can hear what they need and see the timing cards. Confirm the route, stand height and any seating or reading-light request. Keep adjustments practical and private.

6 Keep a recovery option

Have the spare cable or microphone ready. For a failure, pause, mute the affected channel and let the sound lead diagnose it. If safe and suitable, switch to an unamplified spoken-word format; otherwise end or postpone affected sets.

Make sign-ups straightforward

Publish the process

State when and where sign-ups open, whether advance requests exist, the set limit and how remaining slots are assigned. Use a first-come list, a random draw or a clearly stated rotation. Pick one method before people arrive.

Keep the public sheet minimal

Ask only for stage name and performance type on page 24. Keep phone numbers, email, access requests and media choices off the public clipboard. Store individual performer cards with the host, out of audience view.

Confirm before promising a slot

Check the set length, equipment, age eligibility and content fit. Ask how to pronounce the stage name and whether the person wants a short introduction. Confirm any needs privately; do not request a diagnosis.

Close and post the order

Tell people when the first order is final and where they can see it. Mark checked-in acts on the running order. Announce only stage names and performance types, never private notes.

Use a visible waitlist rule

A waitlist is not a guaranteed set. If someone is absent, move to the next ready act. Return to the absent act only if time remains under the same published rule. Do not displace someone who waited for a last-minute friend of the host.

Ask separately about future contact

Event sign-up does not mean permission for a mailing list. Make any future-event opt-in separate and optional, say what will be sent and provide a way to stop it. Follow your local privacy requirements.

Run a fair lineup

Use the same clock for everyone

Start timing when the performance begins. Keep the introduction and standard changeover in the slot plan. Tell acts that spoken introductions, tuning and audience conversation within their set count toward their limit.

One minute left

Show the agreed card where the performer can see it. Do not flash lights unexpectedly or rely only on color. Offer an agreed accessible alternative, such as a spoken cue, before the set.

When time is up

Show the stop card. If the performer does not finish, the host steps in with a calm closing line. Avoid a surprise audio cut except where the manager or sound lead needs to stop an immediate problem.

Keep two acts ready

The host quietly checks the next performer and the one after them. Confirm equipment before calling the name. Explain any swap, and note it on the running order so the sound and floor leads share the same plan.

When the event is running late

Use recovery time first. Remove optional announcements, not someone's promised set without explanation. If a change is necessary, tell every affected performer before their turn and use the same rule consistently.

No secret queue advantages

Disclose reserved or featured slots in advance. Avoid pay-to-skip requests, hidden friend slots or audience-pressure contests. Ask before moving someone for an access need; solve the practical problem without publicly sharing the reason.

Open the night clearly

Fill every bracket before you read this. Keep the opening to about three minutes, then introduce the first act.

Welcome

“Good evening, and welcome to [event name] at [venue]. I'm [host]. Tonight we're sharing [formats]. First-time performers are welcome, and listening is part of the night too.”

How the lineup works

“Each act has [minutes]. I'll show a one-minute card, then a time-up card. Please help us give everyone their turn. The order is [location]. If you need to leave or change your setup, tell me before your slot.”

How we treat each other

“Please keep conversations low, silence alerts and let each act finish. No heckling, threats, harassment or unwanted touching. Don't record or photograph performers without permission. If you need help or something feels wrong, speak privately to [floor lead/location].”

How the room works

“You can order [method]. Our break is around [time], and we finish by [time]. The toilets are [location]. Please keep [route] clear. [Add only verified access information.]”

First introduction

“Our first performer is [stage name, pronunciation checked], sharing [short approved description]. Please welcome [stage name].”

> For a no-recording night, say “Tonight is a no-recording event.” Do not announce that all performers have agreed to recording unless each relevant permission has actually been obtained.

Keep useful lines ready

Between acts

“Thank you, [stage name]. Next up is [stage name]. We'll take a moment to adjust the microphone, then we'll begin.”

When a performer is absent

“We'll move to our next ready performer, [name]. If you've stepped away, please check back in with me.”

When time has run out

“Thank you, [name]. That's our time for this set. Let's give them a hand as we make room for our next performer.”

For a technical pause

“We're pausing briefly to fix the sound. Please keep the performance area clear while our sound lead checks it.”

For the service break

“We'll restart at [time]. This is a good moment to order or stretch. [Names of next two acts], please check in with me before we resume.”

To reset the room

“Please give this performer a listening room. Keep conversation low and let them finish their set.”

To close

“Thank you to every performer, listener and member of the venue team. Please [checkout/order detail]. Our next confirmed event is [date/details], or check [verified channel] for updates. Get home safely.”

Make the welcome practical

Describe the room honestly

Share verified entrance, seating, toilet and sound information before the event. Give a contact for access questions. If you cannot meet a request, say what is possible and work with the guest on an alternative; do not promise a fully accessible experience without checking.

Offer choices without spotlighting people

Ask privately about microphone height, a chair, a reading light, a clear route or another timing cue. Let performers use a stage name. Never introduce someone through their disability, identity or personal history unless they specifically asked you to.

Set boundaries around behavior

No threats, targeted harassment, slurs directed at people, unwanted contact or interruptions. The manager should apply the venue policy consistently. A performer can explore difficult subjects without making an unwilling guest part of the act.

Clarify the audience

Choose and advertise the age policy and content expectations. If you run an all-ages event, confirm the venue's safeguarding and alcohol-service arrangements separately. This kit is not a youth-event policy or parental permission form.

Give people a discreet route to help

Name the floor lead and show where to find them. Do not demand that someone explain a concern on stage. Allow guests to move seats or step out without being mocked or questioned publicly.

Ask for improvement

Use the optional feedback slips on page 31. Ask what made it easier to participate and what would help next time. Make no purchase, tip, social follow or feedback form a hidden condition of performing.

Respond without escalating

Low-level noise or an interruption

The host makes one calm room-wide request. The floor lead can then speak privately to the person if appropriate. Avoid a public argument, sarcasm or inviting the audience to take sides.

Harassment or a boundary crossing

Pause the set if needed. The manager applies the venue policy and checks on the affected person privately. Offer space and practical help. Do not pressure them to confront someone, accept an apology or continue performing.

An unsafe or impaired performer

Do not bring them on stage if they cannot use the area safely. The manager handles the conversation and support under venue procedures. Do not turn their condition into entertainment or promise another guest will take responsibility for them.

A threat, violence or urgent medical concern

Stop the event and use the venue emergency plan. Keep people away from danger; contact local emergency services when needed. Do not attempt physical restraint or a risky intervention. Follow instructions from trained staff and responders.

A technical failure or excessive sound

Pause, lower or mute the affected system and let the sound lead check it. The manager decides whether a safe, suitable fallback is possible. Unplugging unfamiliar powered equipment or making live repairs is not a host task.

Afterward

Write a factual, minimal record on page 32: time, observed behavior, action and who took over. Avoid speculation or diagnoses. Keep it secure, limit access and follow the venue's retention policy. Review what should change before another event.

Check rights before the show

The following is general planning guidance. Rules vary by country, location, repertoire and use. Ask the venue's licensing adviser or a qualified local professional to resolve uncertainty before you proceed.

Live music

For U.S. venues, confirm permissions for the music actually performed. BMI explains that its license covers its own repertoire; another organization's license does not automatically cover BMI music. A background-music service may not cover live performance. “Original songs only” is not a substitute for checking who controls the rights. [1]

Recording and posting are separate decisions

A song and a recording can be separate protected works. Before filming, livestreaming, posting clips or using backing tracks, check every intended use and the relevant rights. A performer agreeing to appear on camera does not by itself clear someone else's composition or recording. [2]

A workable default

Start with no venue recording or livestream. Ask the audience not to record. If you later want media, identify the operator, content, platforms and intended use, then obtain appropriate permissions before recording or sharing. Do not treat the sign-up sheet as a blanket release.

Use the forms carefully

Page 25 records preferences only; it is not a legal release. Page 34 tracks the checks and unresolved questions. Do not collect sensitive information you do not need. Keep any actual permissions in secure venue records.

> Also check local event, occupancy, noise, alcohol-service, insurance and accessibility requirements with the venue. The sources on page 36 explain U.S. music rights; they do not approve your specific event.

Promote a clear invitation

Replace every bracket and verify the details before publishing. Choose a single place for changes or cancellation notices. Never promise a guaranteed slot when capacity is limited.

Short listing

“Open Mic at [venue] - [date], [start-finish]. [Music/comedy/poetry/spoken word]. Sign-ups open [time/method]. Sets are up to [minutes], with [number] planned slots; [assignment rule]. [Entry details and age policy]. Performers and listeners welcome. Access questions and updates: [contact/link].”

Social caption

“Bring a song, a poem, a short set or your listening ears. [Venue] hosts [event] on [date] at [time]. [Allowed formats]. [Minutes] per act; sign up [how/when]. [Entry details]. [Age/content policy]. Please read the equipment and recording notes at [link].”

Reminder

“Open Mic is [day] at [venue]. Sign-ups: [time]. First act: [time]. Finish: [time]. Bring [required equipment/material]. We provide [verified equipment]. [Waitlist rule]. Latest details: [link].”

Change or cancellation

“Update for [event/date]: [specific change]. [What existing performers/guests should do]. [Any applicable admission refund or rebooking details confirmed by the venue]. Questions: [contact].”

Ask before using a performer's photo, name or quote in promotion. Replace old posters and update every channel when a material detail changes. Page 35 is a fill-in venue notice.

Know the cost of a night

Illustrative planning example only, in USD. These figures are invented for arithmetic, not market rates, expected earnings or a recommended selling price. Replace them with actual quotes and venue data.

Incremental event cost	Example
Host fee	$90
Extra staffing	$60
Equipment rental	$35
Printing and promotion	$15
Allocated licensing and other costs	$20
Contingency	$20
Total incremental event cost	$240

Use contribution, not gross sales

Suppose additional sales attributable to the event are $400 and the related variable food, drink and payment costs are $160. Additional contribution is $400 - $160 = $240. Against $240 of event costs, the estimated incremental result is $0.

If contribution is $8 per genuinely additional guest, $240 / $8 = 30 additional guests to cover the event costs. That is arithmetic, not a forecast. Existing customers who would have visited anyway are not automatically additional guests.

Avoid a misleading success story

Track ordinary comparable-night sales, seating displaced by the event, staff workload, refunds, discounts and actual costs. Use ticket or sponsor income only when confirmed; do not count it twice. Licensing and staffing costs may differ substantially from this example.

Use page 30 to compare planned and actual amounts. Decide how much the venue can spend on a test before committing.

Make the next night easier

Finish the evening properly

Thank the team, confirm equipment is complete and secure the performer cards. Pay any agreed fees through the venue process. Record unresolved concerns for the manager, not in the public event recap.

Review within a day or two

Compare the planned and actual finish, slots offered and used, estimated attendance, service impact and incremental costs. Use the debrief on page 33. Ask the staff what was difficult; a full room alone does not prove the format worked.

Change one or two things

If the show drifted late, shorten announcements or reduce slots. If service suffered, move the break or adjust staffing. If one format needed extra setup, give it a dedicated night. Record the change so the next host inherits it.

Build repeat participation fairly

Rotate opportunities according to the published rule. Welcome first-timers without guaranteeing a slot you cannot provide. If you reserve space for returning or new performers, say how many spots are reserved before sign-ups open.

Share only what you have permission to share

A recap can simply thank the room and announce the next confirmed date. Post names, quotes, images or recordings only under the relevant permissions. Do not publish audience contact details or private feedback.

Decide whether to repeat

Continue when the venue can sustain the cost, staff load and atmosphere. Change the format or pause if safety, permissions or service problems remain unresolved. Confirm the next event before advertising it.

Print only what you need

Pages 21-35 are reusable worksheets. Print at actual size on US Letter, or use fit-to-page on A4. The worksheet pages use a white background to reduce ink. Print single-sided for clipboards.

Page	Printable	How to use it
21	Event brief	One per event; manager and host
22	Opening checklist	One per event; named owners
23	Soundcheck checklist	One per setup; sound lead
24	Public performer sign-up	Twelve names per sheet; no contacts
25	Performer check-in card	One per act; keep private
26	Host running order	Twelve slots; host and sound lead
27	Timing cards	Cut into two; reuse
28	Room and service plan	One per layout
29	Promotion planner	One per event campaign
30	Event budget	One per event; planned and actual
31	Feedback slips	Two per page; optional
32	Incident record	Only when needed; keep secure
33	Event debrief	One per event; manager and team
34	Rights and media check log	Resolve before affected use
35	Venue information notice	Complete and post for guests

Keep public sheets separate from private records. Retain only what the venue needs, with an appropriate retention period. Page 25 is a planning card, not a legal release.

Event brief

Event name / date / venue

Doors / sign-up opens / sign-up closes / first act / finish

Formats / age and content policy / entry details

Minutes per act / changeover / slot count / waitlist rule

Manager / host / sound lead / floor lead and how to reach them

Equipment supplied / restrictions / access contact

Recording policy / permission checks / cancellation channel

Manager ready-to-run decision: _____ Date: _____

Opening checklist

Event/date: _____ Manager: _____

- ☐ Event brief completed; staffing and finish time agreed
- ☐ Capacity, local requirements and permissions checked
- ☐ Exits, accessible routes and service paths clear
- ☐ Stable performance area, seating and microphone route checked
- ☐ Cables protected; electrical setup checked by sound lead
- ☐ Equipment and backup tested; levels agreed with manager
- ☐ Age, content, sign-up and recording policies visible
- ☐ First three acts checked in; names and setup confirmed
- ☐ Timer, cue cards, pens and printed running order ready
- ☐ Host, sound and floor leads know pause and emergency signals
- ☐ Toilets, access information and help contact verified
- ☐ Order/service plan and planned break agreed with floor team

Unresolved item / owner / decision before opening

Ready to open? Yes / No Manager initials: _____

Soundcheck checklist

Date: _____ Operator: _____ Setup: _____

- ☐ Inspect power, stands, cables and equipment; remove damaged items
- ☐ Confirm microphone position and safe speaker placement
- ☐ Lower outputs; follow the system power-on sequence
- ☐ Check each input at expected performance level without clipping
- ☐ Listen from front, back and service area; agree operating level
- ☐ Test each instrument/backing-track connection that is permitted
- ☐ Confirm who mutes channels before connection or position changes
- ☐ Check timer visibility, stand height, chair and reading light
- ☐ Test spare microphone/cable; agree a safe fallback
- ☐ Record the shutdown procedure and equipment return owner

Channel	Source / performer	Connection / starting notes
1		
2		
3		

Issue to resolve before first act / owner

Performer sign-up

Event/date: _____ Sign-ups close: _____

Set limit: _____ minutes Slots: _____ Order method: _____

Stage names only here. Give contact details, access requests and recording preferences privately to the host. Signing up does not guarantee a slot.

No.	Stage name	Type of performance	Host check
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

Waitlist rule: _____
_____

Host: _____ Where to check the order: _____

Performer check-in

Keep with the host. This card records event details and preferences; it is not a legal release or a transfer of rights.

Event/date / stage name / pronunciation

Format / brief introduction you want the host to use

Set minutes / instruments / inputs / backing-track needs

Optional access or timing request (no diagnosis needed)

Media preference for this event

☐ No venue photo, video or audio recording of my set

☐ Please ask me privately about a specific media proposal first

Neither choice authorizes recording or posting. Any later permission must identify the use and be handled separately; music and other rights may also need clearance.

Optional future-event contact

I want [venue] to send open-mic date updates by: email / text
Contact: _____
How to stop updates: _____

Leave blank if you do not want updates. The venue must complete the sender and stop method before offering this option.

Host check: time signal, boundaries and equipment agreed / initials

Host running order

Date: _____ First act: _____ Hard finish: _____

Set limit: _____ Changeover: _____ Break: _____

Slot	Start	Stage name	Setup / cue	Ready
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

Waitlist (stage names only, in agreed order)

Approved changes / host and sound lead informed

Keep access details and private concerns off any posted copy.

Timing cards

Show these where the performer can see them. Agree an alternative cue privately when needed. Cut along the middle line.

ONE MINUTE

Please bring your set toward its close.

TIME IS UP

Thank you. Please finish your set now.

Timing method: begin at the start of the performance.
The host handles overruns calmly and consistently.

Room and service plan

Event/date: _____ Floor lead: _____

Sketch: mic, speakers, seats, host desk, waiting area, exits, accessible routes and service/cable paths. Check actual conditions.

Ordering method / service break / check or last-order timing

Quieter seating / verified access information / help point

Floor lead to host signal / who covers a concern

Layout or service problem to fix before opening

Promotion planner

Confirmed event name / date / venue / address / times

Formats / set limit / slot method / sign-up instructions

Entry and age details / equipment / recording policy / access contact

Channel	Post date	Owner	Updated if changed
Venue notice			
Website/listing			
Social post			
Reminder			

Approved short description and call to action

Where the latest updates and cancellation notice will live

Before posting: remove brackets; check every date, link and claim. Use performer images or quotes only with the relevant permission.

Event budget

Event/date: _____ Currency: _____

Incremental cost	Planned	Actual
Host / sound fees		
Extra staffing		
Equipment / transport		
Promotion / printing		
Licensing allocation / other		
Contingency / unexpected		
TOTAL COST (A)		

Incremental contribution	Planned	Actual
Additional sales attributable to event		
Less related variable costs		
= Sales contribution (B)		
Net admission / confirmed sponsor (C)		
RESULT: B + C - A		

Comparable-night baseline: _____ Additional guests: _____
Contribution per additional guest: ____ Cost to test: _____

Break-even additional guests = (A minus confirmed net non-sales contribution C) / contribution per additional guest. Round up; use only a positive contribution figure. If C covers A, no sales contribution is needed under these assumptions.

Include fees, discounts and refunds consistently. Do not count ordinary sales, gross revenue or sponsor income twice.

Guest and performer feedback

How was the open mic?

Date: _____ I attended as: listener / performer / staff

I could hear comfortably: Yes / Partly / No
The event felt welcoming: Yes / Partly / No
The timing and sign-up process were clear: Yes / Partly / No

One thing to keep

One thing to improve

Optional and anonymous. Please do not include private details about other people. For an urgent concern, speak to the venue manager.

How was the open mic?

Date: _____ I attended as: listener / performer / staff

I could hear comfortably: Yes / Partly / No
The event felt welcoming: Yes / Partly / No
The timing and sign-up process were clear: Yes / Partly / No

One thing to keep

One thing to improve

Optional and anonymous. Please do not include private details about other people. For an urgent concern, speak to the venue manager.

Incident record

Use the venue emergency plan first. This record is for necessary facts, not speculation. Store securely with access limited to people who need it.

Event/date / time / location / staff member completing record

What staff directly observed (separate any reported information)

Action taken / by whom / time / who assumed responsibility

Practical support offered / immediate outcome

Follow-up owner / deadline / venue record reference

Manager reviewed: _____ Date: _____
Stored at: _____ Retention review: _____

Collect only necessary personal details under the venue policy. Do not put this record on a public sign-up sheet or in a promotional recap.

Event debrief

Event/date: _____ Review date: _____

Measure	Planned	Actual
Start / finish		
Slots offered / performed		
Estimated attendance		
Incremental event result (page 30)		

What worked for performers and listeners

What affected service, access, sound or staff workload

Unresolved safety or permission issue / owner / next step

One or two changes / owner / completion date

Next step: Repeat / Change format / Pause
Next event confirmed? Yes / No Date if confirmed: _____

Invite future contact only from people who separately opted in. Do not publish private feedback or this internal review.

Rights and media check log

This is a planning record, not a license or release. Do not proceed with an unresolved use. Keep actual permissions and advice in secure venue records.

Venue/event / jurisdiction / responsible manager

Planned live formats / repertoire / backing tracks or other material

Licenses or other permissions checked / scope / expiry / record link

Any recording, stream or post: operator / material / platforms / purpose

People and rights needing permission / status / record location

Unresolved question / adviser or rights holder / next step / due date

Affected use approved to proceed? Yes / No
Responsible manager: _____ Date: _____

Performer participation alone is not permission to record or post. Check the intended use and third-party material separately.

Open mic information

Event name / venue / date

Sign-ups open / first act / break / finish

Formats / set limit / available slots / how the order is chosen

Entry details / age and content policy

Recording policy / equipment supplied / how to request help

Help make this a listening room

Keep conversations low. Let each act finish. No heckling, threats, harassment or unwanted contact. Keep the performance area and exits clear. Ask the host privately about a concern or access need.

Host / help point / latest updates and contact

Before you do it again

Keep these decisions current

- ☐ A named manager has resolved venue and permission questions
- ☐ The published format fits the available time and equipment
- ☐ Sign-up, waitlist and timing rules are visible and consistent
- ☐ Guests know the content, age, entry and recording policies
- ☐ Staff know how to pause, get help and handle service
- ☐ The next event reflects the last event's useful lessons

Official source notes

Checked 19 October 2026. The legal references below concern the United States. Check the appropriate local sources for events elsewhere, and recheck before changing how music or media is used.

[1] BMI - Music Licensing for Bars, Restaurants and other Food & Beverage Establishments. Its FAQ explains repertoire coverage, live music, personal streaming accounts and the limits of background-music services.

bmi.com/licensing/restaurant-bar-or-brewery

[2] U.S. Copyright Office - What Musicians Should Know about Copyright. Explains separate musical-work and recording rights, using others' work and checking each intended use.

copyright.gov/engage/musicians/

Use the kit as a working system

Keep a clean master, print fresh forms and update the brief each time. A strong open mic is a repeatable evening that respects performers, listeners and the people running the room.