

**D**ETERMINATION

**R**ELATIONSHIPS

**U**NDERSTANDING

**M**ENTORSHIP

# UP YOUR BUSINESS

*A Practical Blueprint To Thriving  
In The Music Business*

**BART ROBLEY**

HUDSON MUSIC®

**“D”etermination  
“R”elationships  
“U”nderstanding  
“M”entorship  
Up Your Business...  
The Keys To Success**

by **Bart Robley**

**HUDSON MUSIC®**

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# Dedication

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To the memory of **Dom Famularo**, a true ambassador of drumming whose passion, wisdom, and boundless energy forever changed the face of our instrument. Dom's unwavering belief in the power of music made it possible for drummers around the world to chase their dreams, myself included.

I am deeply honored that he wrote the foreword to my book *The Rhythmic Journey*, and I carry his lessons, encouragement, and infectious spirit with me always.

In Dom's words, **"Onward and Upward!"**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bart Robley" with a stylized flourish at the end.



# Table of Contents

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Dedication to Dom Famularo.....	3
Chapter 1: Determination: The Foundation of Success .....	7
Chapter 2: Relationships: The Heart of Your Business .....	23
Chapter 3: Understanding: The Key to Growth .....	44
Chapter 4: Mentorship: Guiding Lights on the Path to Success ....	57
Chapter 5: The Walk Toward Fear .....	73
Chapter 6: The Rhythm of Success.....	84
Chapter 7: Conclusion: Reflections on Your Journey .....	90
Chapter 8: Resources and Tools .....	96
Acknowledgements.....	104
Endorsements.....	106



# Chapter 1:

## Determination - The Foundation of Success

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When I first started out as a musician, I often heard people say, “You must be so inspired to do what you do.” I smiled and nodded politely, but deep down, I knew that inspiration and motivation might get you started, but they won’t keep you going when the road gets tough, and trust me, the road always gets tough. What kept me behind the drum kit, perfecting my craft, hustling for gigs, and showing up every single day wasn’t inspiration or motivation. It was **determination**.

### What Determination Really Means

Determination isn’t glamorous. It doesn’t look like the sparkly “aha!” moments you see in motivational speeches or Instagram posts. Determination is gritty. It’s the decision to keep moving forward even when the path is unclear, the obstacles seem insurmountable, and every part of you wants to give up.

Here’s the truth: inspiration and motivation are fleeting. They’re great when they’re there, but they can vanish as quickly as they appear. Determination, on the other hand, is a steady companion. It’s the quiet resolve that whispers, “Keep going,” when all you want to do is quit.

When you see a musician or a band performing at the top of their game, delivering a flawless performance that captivates the audience, you’re witnessing the culmination of years of relentless effort, dedication, and sacrifice. What you see under the stage lights, the precision, passion, and artistry, is just the tip of the iceberg. Behind that moment of magic lies countless hours of practice, late nights, early mornings, and an unwavering commitment to their craft. It’s easy to be swept up in the glitz and glamour of a great show, but the reality of how it comes together is anything but glamorous.

Most of a musician’s journey happens far away from the stage, in rehearsal spaces, studios, and basements. It’s filled with repetition, playing the same riff, drum fill, or vocal run over and over until it’s ingrained in muscle memory. It’s learning to play through mistakes, fatigue, and





frustration. There's nothing flashy about running scales for hours or practicing transitions until they're seamless, but this is where the magic is built. The process is gritty and, at times, exhausting, requiring discipline and determination to push through even when it feels like progress is slow or nonexistent.

Recently I spent some time with Rich Redmond at a party hosted by Sabian Cymbals at PASIC (Percussive Arts Society International Convention) in Indianapolis. Redmond has been the touring and recording drummer with multi-platinum country rocker Jason Aldean for nearly two decades. He has recorded 31#1 radio hits and plays to millions of fans per year in iconic venues across the globe. Rich has also worked with artists such as Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood, Ludacris, Bryan Adams, Bob Seger, Chris Cornell, Miranda Lambert, Eric Church, Keith Urban, Luke Bryan and many more. Rich is also a busy educator, speaker, author, and actor. Check out his website at [www.richredmond.com](http://www.richredmond.com)

When I told Rich I was writing a book titled "Drum Up Your Business" and that the opening chapter focused on determination, he simply said, "When motivation ends, determination picks up the slack." That was so simple, so perfect! I loved it!

Then there's the unspoken work that doesn't involve the music itself, loading gear in and out of venues, driving for hours (sometimes days) between gigs, managing schedules, and navigating the business side of things. Every successful musician has faced setbacks, from broken strings and technical failures to canceled gigs and financial struggles. They've had to learn how to adapt, problem-solve, and keep going when things didn't go as planned. These moments aren't what audiences think of when they imagine the life of a musician, but they're an integral part of what makes a band or artist great.

The truth is, the road to mastery isn't glamorous, it's down and dirty, full of sweat, sacrifice, and moments of doubt. But it's also incredibly rewarding. The hard work and resilience it takes to reach the top of your game create a depth of character and a profound appreciation for those fleeting moments when everything clicks. When you watch a band deliver an incredible performance, know that it's not just talent you're witnessing, it's a testament to their commitment, passion, and the grit it took to get there.

Successful entrepreneurs, like successful musicians, know this: when inspiration and motivation fail, and they will, it's determination that sees them through.

## Setting Goals and Staying Focused

Determination without direction is like playing a drum solo without a tempo, it's chaotic and ultimately ineffective. That's where goal-setting comes in. Goals give your determination a purpose.

Start with clear, actionable goals. Instead of saying, "I want to grow my business," define exactly what that means: "I want to increase revenue by 25% this year by expanding into two new markets." Once you have a specific goal, break it into smaller, manageable steps.

Here's the secret to staying focused: keep your goals visible. Write them down, hang them on your wall, or set reminders on your phone. When you lose sight of your goals, it's easy to lose your resolve.

Remember, focus is a muscle, and like any muscle, it gets stronger with practice. Eliminate distractions, set aside dedicated time for deep work, and don't be afraid to say no to things that don't align with your goals.

In the music business, "work" isn't confined to rehearsals or performances, it's a multifaceted endeavor that encompasses everything from honing your craft to managing the administrative side of your career. Think of your practice time as a crucial part of your workday. Just like an athlete

trains to stay in peak condition, musicians need regular, focused practice to maintain and improve their skills. Dedicate time each day to refining your technique, learning new material, or experimenting creatively. Treat this as non-negotiable “work time,” because the progress you make behind the scenes directly impacts your success on stage or in the studio.

But work in the music industry doesn’t stop at your instrument. Administrative tasks, like bookkeeping, are just as important. Tracking expenses, managing invoices, and staying on top of your finances may not feel glamorous, but it’s essential for keeping your career running smoothly. Dedicate a portion of your week to organizing receipts, updating spreadsheets, or using financial tools to track your income and expenses. Staying on top of this ensures you’re not scrambling during tax season and gives you a clear picture of your financial health, empowering you to make better decisions for your career.

Another vital component of your work is building and maintaining relationships, which often starts with outreach. Writing emails to potential endorsements, venues, or collaborators is an investment in your future. Crafting thoughtful, professional communication takes time, but it’s worth the effort. Research the brands or individuals you’re contacting, personalize your message, and clearly outline how a partnership would be mutually beneficial. Consistent, professional outreach is how you grow your network and create opportunities for endorsements, gigs, and collaborations. Remember, every email sent, every connection made, and every task completed outside of playing is a brick in the foundation of your career.

**Define Clear Objectives:** *Establish specific, measurable, and achievable goals for your music career, such as completing an album, booking a certain number of gigs, or growing your online presence. Clear objectives provide a roadmap and keep your determination aligned with your vision.*

Defining clear objectives is a foundational step in building a successful music career, as it transforms your aspirations into actionable goals. Specific, measurable, and achievable objectives give you a tangible roadmap to follow, ensuring that your efforts are focused and purposeful. For example, rather than setting a vague goal like “become more successful,” you could aim to complete an album within six months, secure at least two gigs per month, or grow your online audience by a specific percentage over the next quarter. These clearly defined targets make it easier to track



L to R: **Geln Sobel** (Alice Cooper), **Adam Parsons**, **Bart** and **Joey Scott** (Lizzy Borden)

your progress and maintain motivation as you achieve each milestone. They also help you prioritize tasks and allocate your time effectively, ensuring that every action you take aligns with your long-term vision. Clear objectives not only fuel your determination but also allow you to measure success and adapt your strategy as needed, keeping you firmly on the path toward achieving your dreams.

**Break Goals into Actionable Steps:** *Divide larger goals into smaller, manageable tasks, such as writing one song a week or dedicating specific hours to practice or networking. This approach helps you stay focused and maintain consistent progress without feeling overwhelmed.*

Breaking goals into actionable steps is a powerful way to make progress without feeling overwhelmed, and it can be likened to the saying, “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.” Large, intimidating goals, like recording an album or launching a tour, can seem unachievable at first glance. However, when you break them down into smaller, more manageable tasks, they become less daunting. For instance, instead of focusing on the enormity of creating an entire album, you might set a goal to write one