



The Most Common Mistakes Band Directors Make

**CLINICIAN:
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Texas Bandmasters Association 2015 Convention/Clinic

**JULY 23-26, 2015
HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER
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*Texas
Bandmasters
Association*

2015
Convention / Clinic

*The Most Common Mistakes
by Band Directors*

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Clinician*

*Texas Bandmasters Association
68th Annual Convention/Clinic
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Let's explore:

I. What does a successful & effective band director look like?

- a. In his community?
- b. To his band parents?
- c. To his students?
- d. To his administration & fellow colleagues?

II. What is expected of band directors in the 21st century?

- a. teacher
- b. counselor
- c. consultant
- d. promoter
- e. bookkeeper
- f. motivator
- g. accountant
- h. conductor
- i. problem solver
- j. organizer
- k. architect (new hall)
- l. speaker

III. Critical mistakes band directors might make often involve –

- a. Communications / ethics (never compromise your ethics!)
- b. Competition driven (abusive to students, staff and yourself)
- c. Failure to properly plan (rehearsals, trips, transportation, calendar of events, disburse information to everyone/ esp. band parents)
- d. ENJOYMENT for the band experience is compromised (leadership style / director's approach)
- e. Good rehearsal skills (ask for help, seek advice, invite clinicians)
- f. Selection of contest music (seek input from colleagues / music dealers with years of expertise)
- g. Getting "too close" to your students / perceptions/draw the line
- h. Money & financial records (get parent or colleague to assist)
- i. Inappropriate language or gestures of disrespect / insults
- j. Being "fair" and impartial – auditions, leadership tryouts
- k. Failure to "play ball" with your faculty & administration
- l. RETURN phone calls / messages / respond to your email!
- m. Get your paper work done in a timely manner
- n. Ignoring family and personal needs (time and attention)
- o. YOUR HEALTH! (May need to drop some weight; enjoy your life!)
- p. Failing to ask colleagues to come watch / listen to your group
- q. Failure to keep band "fun & enjoyable". Make it meaningful
- r. Maintain energy to make it through the day – get your rest!
- s. Failure to properly interact with an irate parent (must have a plan in advance of the uncomfortable encounter)
- t. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF! It is true- stress can kill you
- u. Balance your band duties with outside activities / create joy for yourself

Suggestions that will produce big-time success for you:

1. Be a professional in every way. How you dress at school/rehearsals/community gatherings. Know your community.
2. Be VERY creative in the area of band's public relations. Starts with you.
3. Promote "good will" in your town; offer to provide your musical groups at the key town gatherings; parades; ribbon-cutting ceremonies, rest homes
4. Invite your school board & superintendent to your concerts. Make sure you acknowledge (and thank) them at the beginning of concerts
5. Send out a special letter to parents when their child has accomplished something marvelous (e.g. all-area, all-state, a ONE at solo/ens contest, Eagle Scout type honors)
6. Read articles in the music journals; keep up with new state rules; TMEA, UIL. Keep your eyes open for the new & improved mouthpieces for your program. Create a network of this kind of information exchange.
7. Don't sweat what you can't control. Ex: bus breaks down on your way to contest or football game—this is out of your control--- HOW you handle it IS in your control (think for solution, e.g. reload students on other buses
8. Invite guest soloist to perform with your group (or solo feature them). These are so cool. Have the soloist do a masterclass in rehearsal.
9. Go to live performances! Encourage (or better yet, take) your students to local concerts- symphony, college bands, church, etc. Invite college chamber groups or bands to come perform on your campus.
- 10 Teach your band to respect/ applaud the hard work of other bands
- 11 Promote band director gatherings / bond with your colleagues
- 12 Send notes of congratulations to other directors & their band for their achievements. This is a VERY classy gesture on your part.
- 13 Bond with your faculty when you get the opportunity. Let them know that you value academics and that you promote academics first!

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- 14 RETURN phone calls! You will always be “too busy”, but you have to do this – You will earn tremendous respect and stature in your community. Remember, YOU are the CEO of your band program. It is after all, your job.
- 15 Be positive in your approach to situations – especially when you find yourself confronted in an unpleasant situation. Maybe, just maybe you made an unfair decision, and should rethink matters. Don't feel that to change your mind about a situation / problem solving is a sign of weakness. In reality, this is a sign of strength.

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Notes: