



Idea to Downbeat:

Planning a Coordinated and Cohesive Field Show

Presented by Eric Weingartner and Ryan Springler

Purpose: Our goal is to give you information that you can use to make your planning and design process more efficient. We will be sharing from the perspectives of a band director and a show designer.

EARLY PROCESS - 8 to 9 months before your first show.

Timeline: This will help make sure the big picture goals are clear. Use it to keep everyone on track and working in a timely manner. When is the wind book written? When does the percussion writing start? When do you want drill? What is the date for completion of the production? When do props arrive?

Communications: Lead design team and directors to establish tone and direction of the program, selection of references and repertoire.

- Know when to introduce members of your creative team. Who helps drive conversations? Who asks the right questions? The conversation probably should start small, and fold people in as their expertise is needed in specific captions.
- Find people you work well with. If your process isn't going well, figure out why, make a change.

Budget: Whether your design team is very small, or large, know what your constraints are. What is realistic for your program?

- Initial communications with all prop designers, costume makers, etc... any "outside" members of the team. this timeline has vastly lengthened in the past few years. It's best to be proactive as possible.

MIDDLE PROCESS - 4 to 5 months before your first show.

Organization: Have agreed upon, easily accessible places you store show materials. BOX, Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.

Materials: Make sure the design staff is producing material that is useful to each other and accessible (Sibelius vs Finale, full ensemble PDFs for drill writing, preview MP3's for guard staff that may not have music software, etc.)

Flexibility: The more "slack" you build into the timeline, the more opportunities you have to dialogue about the material and optimize it. Does it fit your initial idea? Do you need to adjust based on a caption's needs? Keep active during this phase... small conversations now will usually prevent large issues later.

Count Sheets: Formatting, use of google drive, what info is most important? The count sheet should respond to the needs of your team, and the needs of the design. Perhaps you have props or lighting design that require their own "caption" to keep track of.

Drill Writer: Communicating numbers of the band. Strengths, weaknesses, staging requests. Be aware of timeline and scheduling issues and get info in as early as you can.

Adapt: As the material rolls in, you should be able to establish an even clearer idea of what your actual production timeline is.

- Edit as needed - Don't be afraid to adjust music parts due to staging demands, or strengths/weaknesses of a specific section. The earlier you edit, the better.

LATE PROCESS - Summer rehearsals, Band Camp, and start of school.

Reality: Work to understand the skill sets each section of your production will require, and schedule your musical and visual technique blocks accordingly.

Rehearsal Planning: Create a clear rehearsal plan that everyone can follow. Distribute it in an efficient manner where everyone can see it. Keep Drum Majors in the loop with rehearsal goals. Budget time for each portion of rehearsal, but don't stay "married" to it.

Staying organized: Chunk sheets, drill scores, other physical materials that aid organization

Communications: Continue checking in with your goals, and establishing/adjusting them as necessary. Will a week's focus be learning? Production? Excellence?

- Consistency will help. Structure within the rehearsal day, week to week.
- Keep your captions on the same page. Nobody likes being blindsided in a rehearsal. Especially when doing something out of the ordinary.