



TIPS FROM THE PROFESSIONALS

# Comedian Dan Nainan





*So this comedian walks into a bar...*

*He skips on the alcohol, sets up a merchandise table, and hands out his business cards! \*ba dum tsh\**



...Ok, maybe that wasn't the punch line you were expecting, but it's exactly what professional comedian and **GigMasters** member **Dan Nainan** does at all of his shows. Take it from this seasoned comic, there are definitely rules of engagement when it comes to crafting a career in the notoriously competitive world of comedy. That's why we sat down to talk over the do's and don'ts every professional comedian should consider before booking the next gig.



## DAN'S TOP 10 TIPS

### 1 Wake up early

I know this sounds difficult for a comedian, since so many of our shows are late at night. But the business of this business is going on during the day – auditions for commercials, phone calls, etc. Do you want to be one of the many comedians who party all night and wake up in the afternoon, or one of the few comedians who wake up early to get stuff done?

### 2 Consider cleaning up your act

Jerry Seinfeld once told me, “You should do clean! You will work everywhere!” And he was right – I’ve booked gigs for President Obama, Donald Trump, and Steve Wozniak, because I keep it clean. And did I mention clean comedians can really cash in? Clean comedians who have never been on television can make \$20,000 off of one corporate event. Believe me, I know this from experience.

### 3 Write things down

The key to observational comedy is to write down all those funny things you witness right away. If you don’t take out your phone and immediately jot down that amusing comment or hilarious interaction, chances are you’ll forget it.







## 4 Sell merchandise at your shows

CDs, DVDs, t-shirts, whatever. People will buy anything if you have a great show. Make sure that you set up a table by the exit, so everyone has to pass by it. I have my iPad set up with a blinking, scrolling sign to draw people's attention to my table. Use some cheap, plastic stands to prop up a few of the items — people won't see your merchandise as easily if it's flat on the table.

## 5 Get professional-looking business cards

The business cards should state "Comedian" on them and have your photo. Hand a business card to each and every person who passes by your table (see #4). I've been booked by people who told me that I handed them a business card five years ago.

## 6 Don't watch television

This may sound counterintuitive, but every minute you spend watching television is a minute you could spend improving your act and marketing yourself. Many people tell me I need to watch television in order to be successful in show business. Well, I don't watch television, and I've managed to perform professionally in 21 countries across four continents!

## 7 Learn how to use a computer

Knowing how to use email correctly, how to keep a mailing list, how to edit and upload audio/video files, and how to be engaged on social media are all critically important today. Not sure how to go about uploading an MP4 or creating a Twitter account? Search for how-to articles and videos on Google and YouTube – and start learning.

## 8 Sign up for comedy classes

We're all professionals here, but I'll be the first to assert that continuing to take classes and workshops is the best way to fine tune your act. Plus, they're great settings for testing your jokes. If you can get other professionals to laugh, you can be fairly certain they will work in front of an audience.

## 9 Ask for more money

Many comedians sell themselves short. I think too many comedians are willing to perform for peanuts; we wind up underselling ourselves because we're afraid to charge what we're worth. If everyone asked for more, we could all make more money.

## 10 Take care of yourself

So many entertainers are self-destructive. I've performed all over the world, and everywhere I go, I always see comedians smoking, drinking, and even doing drugs in the green room before a show. You can't be at your best if you are impaired or drunk on stage. By eating right, working out, getting to sleep early, and avoiding self-abusive behavior, you can extend your lifespan, be at the top of your game, and live a full, happy life.

### *Bonus Tip*

#### **Don't be afraid to say "Yes"**

Juggling a career in comedy can be overwhelming. But here at GigMasters, we find that a little positivity can go a long way when it comes to booking gigs and preserving loyal clients. If a client suggests you meet for lunch or coffee at any point after a gig, say yes! Dan explains, "In the beginning, it was just about getting the booking. But increasingly, I've found I get a lot of value out of interacting with the client outside of the gig itself."

This works the other way around, too. Try asking a client to meet for a quick bite so that you can follow up in person. "Sometimes we let Facebook or email correspondence become a substitute for real life communication," Dan notes. Taking the time to meet face-to-face with a client or venue manager before or after a gig will help separate you from your competition. And at the end of the day, isn't that what we're all looking to do?

**“People who say ‘Yes’ have more fun!”**

- Dan Nainan





## Being Funny is Serious Business

The competition for high-paying comedy gigs is tight. But by following Dan's tips and marketing yourself well, you'll be in the position to win more business. Partnering with GigMasters will get you the leads you want and make sure you know how to turn those leads into gigs.

Contact us today to learn more about how GigMasters can help you grow your brand of comedy.



the party *starts* here

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