

# He Will, He Will Rock You

Interviewed by Christine Chirichella



During this year's virtual Build Business: Pivot & Focus, October 5–9, attendees will enjoy a rock-star keynote presentation when Mark Schulman takes the stage. Schulman is a celebrity drummer for P!NK and author of *Conquering Life's Stage Fright: Three Steps to Top Performance*.

Schulman will impart his wisdom and secrets behind his rock-star mindset during his keynote presentation, *Hacking the Rock Star Attitude*. Whether you're an A/E/C marketer promoting your firm or a business developer working to bring on a new client, attitude and performance are the keys to success.

In his presentation, Schulman will share three core principles to help you find your passion and purpose to break the boundaries of possibility. You'll walk away with a blueprint for how to incorporate a rock-and-roll philosophy, techniques, and swagger to drive performance and energize your work environment.

*Marketer* recently spoke to Schulman, who shares some of his rock-star mindset hacks.

***Marketer:* How did you get your musical start? Do you remember the first time you performed for someone else?**

As the story goes, I saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan when I was barely three, and I remember being totally transfixed in front of the TV. I saw Ringo roll the sticks back and forth and all the screaming girls and that was it, I was in! From that point on, all I cared about was drums.

By the time I was 9 years old, my parents couldn't deny my passion, and they bought me my first set. I played in a band and had my first professional gig when I was 12 years old on the night of my bar mitzvah. I was more excited to be playing a gig than about my bar mitzvah. I'll never forget it; I got paid \$50. I remember thinking, "I can get paid for playing drums, are you kidding me?"

***Marketer:* What inspired you to make the leap from rock star to keynote speaker and author?**

It happened really organically. I held my first drum/music clinic in 1991 and discovered that I have a gift to be able to communicate and involve drumming. I started to realize that people were resonating with my coaching and stories more than simply the playing. Then I realized, wow, I could move this out of the microcosm of the music business and share my experiences and use them as a metaphor for top performance in the collegiate and corporate format.

I began putting together programs that had content relevant for those audiences, focusing on formulas for success. Some of the concepts I speak about now I began incorporating and refining to the



point where I realized I could have a lot of relevance. I could provide an enormous service and an energetic or “edutaining” presentation for the corporate market.

I love speaking and I play drums, so I won’t do a speaking gig if I can’t play drums inside the gig. It’s one of the things that people look forward to, and it makes me unique. And it seems to be working. I seem to have hit on the correct hybrid of really high energy, rock-and-roll, and usable content that people can immediately incorporate into their personal and professional lives.

**Marketer: What is the rock-star mindset, and how can A/E/C marketers and business developers (even introverts) use it to help improve their client relationships and interactions?**

*Hacking the Rock Star Attitude* is based on a triad: Attitude x Behavior = Consequence. What it means is that we can’t always control what happens to us, but we always have the power to control, change, or what I call shift our attitude about what happens to us. Because your attitude is where you’re looking from and that determines what you see.

So, whether you’re having a bad moment, hour, day, or quarter, you know that you have the power to shift your attitude to

The Oculus, New York, NY. Santiago Calatrava. ©Ramsey Bakhom/Parallax, [parallaxagency.com](http://parallaxagency.com).

**📖 Story Behind the Picture**

Calatrava designed the structural ribs of the Oculus as an abstraction of a white dove being released into the sky. The dove is recognized as a universal symbol of peace for a site with a tragic history. The glaziers in the photo help illustrate the enormous scale.

drive more desirable behavior to produce more desirable consequences.

The most effective way to utilize this formula in your work environment is to reverse engineer the process. Ask yourself, “What kind of consequences or outcomes am I looking for?” Based on that answer, you would reverse engineer this to determine what specific behavior or behaviors you would need to foster these consequences or outcomes. Then you back track again and determine what kind of attitude would you need to foster to generate that behavior? You can produce outcomes or consequences that you never thought imaginable!

**Marketer: How does this triad affect relationships?**

You have the ability any moment to shift your attitude. Think about how that’s going to affect the people with whom you’re communicating. Think about the power it gives you to control who you are, what you say, what happens with your behavior, and then the consequences you can generate. Then, if that’s not enough, think about your ability to affect the attitudes of others.

Let’s take a customer as an example. Every single decision any customer makes begins with their attitude about themselves, you, and your brand. It all

begins with attitude. So, if you understand that, by having the power over your attitude and the power to affect and influence others' attitudes, that's going to drive more desirable behavior. And that will produce consequences that affect the bottom line.

**Marketer: Can you share more about the importance of attitude in succeeding in work and life?**

I'm not the greatest drummer in the world. I might be the greatest drummer for P!NK, but there's always somebody who's better, faster, stronger. We all uniquely have our attitudes, and our attitudes are something that we can create and have control over. And that has so much to do with what we allow, create, and promote in our lives.

But I believe it's 50% nature and 50% nurture. We are who we are. You can't have everything you want, but you can certainly cultivate a lot of what you want. I cultivate what I tend to be good at: teaching, drumming, philosophy, and communication.

There's been a much larger movement in the last 10 years about cultivating our strengths rather than improving our weaknesses. It's important to improve your weaknesses in certain contexts, but realize what your strengths are and really play to them.

In the work environment, look for colleagues' and clients' strong suits, and then cultivate and nurture that. You have a much better chance of success, rather than finding what they need to improve upon. If we allow our natural talents to come out, hopefully, someone else in a position of influence who loves us will be smart enough to see and cultivate that.

**Marketer: What can attendees walk away with after seeing you at Build Business to help them in their roles at work?**

Everything is a performance. When you look at everything in your life as a performance, then you will perform. Every conversation you have with your wife, your mate, or your kids is still a performance. So, view it that way, and have fun with it.

If you're nervous, who are you focusing on? You're focusing on yourself. Who should you be focusing on? Everybody else. If you're giving a presentation or pitch or talking to a client, you're there to be of service to them. If I'm doing anything but thinking about them—like thinking about myself—what does that make me? That makes me a selfish knucklehead. And I start laughing at that. As long as you're there for them, it will all work out.

Millennium Science  
Complex, Penn State  
University, State College,  
PA. Rafael Viñoly  
Architects. ©Ramsey  
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**Attitude x Behavior =  
Consequence**

This is the only way to look at it. If you walk in with the motive of, “How much money can I make?” that’s the wrong approach. My approach is, “How can I be of service to you? What can I do to enhance your life?” Make it about them. Make it about their goals and what’s important to them. Make it about the experience or service you’re providing. Because if I enhance your life, my life’s going to be enhanced too. It’s easy.

### **Marketer: How does teamwork play a role in hacking the rock-star attitude?**

Teamwork is vital, both with customers and clients, and, of course, with your associates. That’s why the band metaphor is so important. With the P!NK tour, we had 225 people on the road—we were a traveling corporation of creative people, technical people, engineers, and logicians. The riggers, as an example, started work at 5 a.m. to do the engineering to hang the lights, PA, and staging. Then they’re the last to leave at 2 a.m. They are my heroes! My job is easy compared to theirs.

I believe that every single person and every job is so critical. Every person has to tap into their rock-star attitude, because we couldn’t survive this tour without everybody being completely on top of their game. Everyone has to treat their job like, “I’m a rock star, that’s what I do.” No one has a low self-image, it’s all important—right down to sweeping the floor. Because if someone slips and falls, that becomes the most important job. Everybody has their rock-and-roll position inside the tour.

No band can have the magnitude of their success without all of the members. It truly is the combined energy, talent, and influence of everybody. And the boss, P!NK, that’s the way she views it. She goes into the cafeteria and eats with everybody. She doesn’t think of herself as above everybody. Because we’re all in this thing together.

### **Marketer: What would you like the attendees to learn and feel after hearing your keynote?**

*Hacking the Rock Star Attitude* is all about tapping into the secrets, stories, and methodologies of what’s created by great rock stars and how people can apply that back to their lives. I tell stories about how people have created attitude shifts, either consciously or unconsciously, to produce this incredible

behavior and unpredictable consequences and outcomes. And anybody can do it.

Everybody can feel like they’re tapping into their own inner rock star. And that sounds corny but, I’m telling you, it really works. You get in this groove and you start to realize we’re all a band. And it’s not about what we play but how we play it.

The experience of my presentation is all about how we do it together. I could just leave all the information with you and you would think, “That’s great information.” But if while I’m presenting, I’m playing drums to demonstrate and bringing people onstage and doing interactive rhythmic exercises with the audience—then you have a show. Then you have an experience and walk away thinking, “Wow.”

Because life is about experiences. And, the truth is, we all love unforgettable experiences and stories. People don’t learn from just hearing and writing down concepts. They learn because you have this incredible story behind the concept, like how P!NK almost died when she was about to fly through the air.

I want people on the edge of their seats. That’s the part of my presentation that gets super cool and unique. I guarantee you’ll never have experienced anything like this in life, I promise you.

### **Marketer: Any last words of wisdom?**

One of basic foundations of the rock-star mandate is to have as much fun as you can. Studies have shown that if you’re having fun, you’re going to perform at a higher level. In my business, which might seem a little easier than your members’ jobs in many ways, we don’t work music, we play music.

What if you looked at what you do as playing or performing instead of working? Maybe it’s a little bit of a stretch, but you can look at it as a performance.

That’s what rock-and-rollers understand. The most balanced and happiest performers understand that. We don’t get onstage to be miserable. Even if bands are presenting a dark performance, they’re still loving it. Music is a great metaphor for top performers. ■

*Editor’s Note: Additional interview questions with Mark Schulman can be found at [buildbusiness.org](http://buildbusiness.org).*

**BUILD  
BUSINESS 20**

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October 5–9, 2020  
Virtual Experience  
[buildbusiness.org](http://buildbusiness.org)

Learn more during the October 7 keynote presentation, *Hacking the Rock Star Attitude*, during the virtual SMPS annual conference.



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