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What's a piano bar? Piano bars are specialty clubs that feature a professional pianist playing popular songs for guests. Some of these bars are loud and cater to younger crowds, while some are smaller with dim lighting and romantic tables for two. Being in the business of fun requires serious effort behind the scenes. Decide what kind of atmosphere you want to create and think about what you want to offer as far as drinks, food and entertainment. What customer demographics do you want to attract? Choose a name for the piano bar that fits the concept you want to create. For example, a bar called "Quiet Nights" would attract a different crowd than one called "Merrymaking". Depending on your goals, you can select a small space for a more intimate ambiance or a large one for more of a party atmosphere. Check with your city's planning office to find out about zoning laws and any licenses or permits you need. Unless you can pay for everything yourself, you'll need lenders or investors to help finance your piano bar startup. Before committing funds, lenders and investors want to see a detailed business plan that shows you've given careful consideration to every aspect of the business. You can go online to find templates for a traditional business plan. A business plan includes these elements: The executive summary briefly describes your business and why it will be successful. Include the business name, a description of the products and services offered and information about the employees and leadership team. The company description tells about the customers you plan to serve and the competitive advantages you will offer over similar businesses. A market analysis demonstrates a solid understanding of the industry, including trends, themes and the competition. The legal structure of your business states whether you will operate as a sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability corporation (LLC) or another form. The organization of the company, typically shown with an organizational chart, details the unique qualifications of key individuals. The services and product line section of the business plan describes what you will offer customers. For example, you may want to host sing-alongs or open mic nights. You may want to develop signature cocktails or feature local craft beers. The marketing strategy details how you will attract and retain customers and what you'll do to increase sales while still encouraging responsible drinking. The funding request specifies what you're asking for and how it will be spent. The financial projections show what you expect your business to look like for the next five years. Include forecasted income statements and quarterly, even monthly, earnings and expenditures estimates. Location matters when applying for a liquor license. Costs can range from \$12,000 to \$400,000 for full liquor licenses, while beer and wine licenses can cost as low as \$3,000. Laws vary from state to state. In some cases, states limit the number of establishments that can serve alcohol at any given time, meaning that you may have to wait for a license. Apply for licensure early in the process of starting your business. When word gets out that a new club is opening up and will feature live music, performers are likely to start getting in touch with you. Visit establishments similar to the one you want to open and, if you like the music, ask the pianist for contact information. You can also find musicians advertising on websites such as Craigslist and GigSalad. Local music stores and college music departments can also give you leads on piano players for hire. Word-of-mouth advertising is considered the most effective way to build bar business. As you get ready to open your piano bar, plan promotional events to attract your target demographic. Consider both grand opening events and regularly scheduled events to draw attention to your piano bar and keep customers coming in. The piano is built to last, and chances are it will (for at least a few decades). But whether it will be worth having by that point depends a great deal on where it's kept today.If you own an acoustic piano - or you plan to buy a used one - you need to know the right room conditions in which it should be kept. Use the following guidelines to help you create or update a piano room to both complement and protect your instrument: Ivan Hunter/Digital Vision/Getty Images An ideal piano room is a constant 70-72° F (21-22° C); going too much higher or lower upsets tuning, weakens delicate internal glue, and contributes to long term wood damage. Make sure you can control the temperature of your piano room, avoid climate fluctuations: Keep your piano from exterior walls, drafty windows and doors, fireplaces, and climate-control vents. If your area has temperature extremes, keep the room protected and well-insulated, especially if your climate-control will be off at night. Placing an area rug beneath a piano is helpful on cold floors, and can also help balance out an overly-bright piano. A piano fares best in 35-45% humidity, but up to 55% is acceptable - so long as it's constant. Fluctuating humidity causes wood - including the ever-important sound board - to swell and release, leading to tuning issues, changes in timbre, silent keys, and a host of other costly, avoidable problems. Tip: If you own an electric piano, keep the humidity level at 55% to prevent static electricity damage. Windows and doors can allow a string of threats to casually wander in and destroy your piano: Condensation - a particular threat to electric keyboards - can be avoided by keeping windows and doors well-insulated; both of which should remain closed when less than 4 feet from a piano. Dust, pollen, and smoke all reach the piano's fragile interior easily, and - with the help of condensation - coat it with a sticky, bacteria-happy residue. Keep the piano lid closed, and invest in a quality cover for your electric keyboard. Direct sunlight should never touch a piano - electric or acoustic. Indirect sunlight can help prevent mold and yellowing keys in acoustic pianos, but be sure to monitor the temperature in a sunny piano room. Your piano room should enhance your piano's voice. 'Bright' pianos - which sound clear, treble, or even mildly piercing - are balanced by absorbent surroundings like carpeting and wall hangings. Subtle, mellow piano voices are complemented by wooden floors and other hard surfaces. Consider the following: Hard-wood floors are great because of their versatility. You can add or remove area rugs to customize the sound of the room. Electric pianos depend on the strength and quality of the speakers used; a small room works best with built-in speakers, but external speakers can always be toggled to suit a room. Correct vibrating surfaces such as windows, loose shelves, or picture frames to avoid harsh tones or falling objects. Adjustable piano benches are a great option, especially for growing children, those sharing a piano, and those still getting comfortable at the keyboard. Traditional piano benches are not one-size-fits-all - you may have to tweak your bench in order to achieve proper piano posture. Tip: Adjustable benches can be found in a surprising array of styles: If you've seen live piano music, you've probably also seen a few pianists take their merry time adjusting the piano bench - some quite meticulously. This is perfectly acceptable, so don't feel self-conscious if you find yourself having to do so at your piano recital. You want to be comfortable, flexible, and stable: If this is impossible or causes you to sit too low, place a sturdy object (from a simple footstool, to one of the fancier pedal platforms) under your feet instead. During play, your feet should provide more stability than the piano bench, so don't let them wander too far in any direction. With your feet in the picture, your hips are no longer your center of gravity - your back is free to flex back and forth, and your torso can provide momentum for your upper body during strong dynamics and long octave spans. Avoid sitting at the piano like you would at a work desk; the keyboard may cover your knees, but your thighs are not meant to be underneath the instrument. Sitting too high in front of the piano can cause pain in the upper back and neck; sitting too low makes for poor playing positions and a reduced view of the keyboard. Your height must allow you to touch the keys with your forearms parallel to the floor. Thighs are nearly parallel; it's ok for knees to be slightly lower than your hips. If you need to add height, sit on a firm pillow or evenly-stacked blankets or bath towels. Sheet music should be kept at eye-level. Learn everything about playing piano, from memorizing notes to navigating the keys, with these tutorials. As you advance, use tips to develop sight-reading skills and master the piano song by song. It's ideal to have your piano tuned four times per year: once each season (assuming you experience all of them). Two tunings per year has become the acceptable standard, but depending on your climate there's a chance that won't be enough. Four times may seem like a lot, but the piano is a stringed instrument, and stringed instruments by nature will always stray off-pitch. A tuning every 3 months will allow the piano to return to its original state after being altered by both climate changes and play, and this consistency will ultimately prolong its life. Twice-yearly tunings require good timing and luck. This is especially true in areas that experience all four seasons. For example, if you tune in September after the hot weather and humidity have subsided, you might be out of tune when the dry, indoor heat goes on in October or November. Tuning every six months is only ideal if you are an occasional player living in a stable climate. Consider the following when sorting out your ideal tuning schedule: Local WeatherClimate extremes are bad for pianos, but fluctuations are often worse. The piano's soundboard is particularly sensitive to this; it expands and contracts according to moisture and temperature, causing the dependent strings to slip out of tune.If you can keep your environment at a constant ideal, you may be able to get away with two tunings per year. Consider the Piano's Level of UseFrequently-played pianos require frequent tunings. Pianos used at least three times per week need a tuning once every three months. Those used for public performances should be tuned at least once a week.For moderately-used pianos, six months is enough time for a problem to develop, but generally not long enough for irreparable damage to occur. Two tunings per year is acceptable if you play once a week or less. No piano, used or unused, should go more than one year without being tuned. If you must settle for the minimum, make sure it's done at equal intervals. Damage Caused By Infrequent Tune-Ups

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