

# Master Of Ceremonies

a beginners guide



# WELCOME

A woman is the central focus, wearing a vibrant lion's mane costume with a plush lion head on top. She has red and yellow fabric flowers in her hair and is wearing blue-tinted sunglasses. She is smiling broadly and looking towards the camera. She wears a black ruffled collar and a sequined top. A red backpack is visible on her back. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting, possibly a beach or festival.

If you are reading this guide, you have been selected to be Costume Kult's first impression on playa.

Either you were hand picked by our resident MCs to become part of the entertainment team; or you excitedly signed up for an MC shift and we are giving you a chance to show us your moves on stage.

Either way, being an MC is a unique experience, only reserved for the bold and witty. So, get ready for a fun, fun time!

# WHAT IS AN MC?

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The Master of Ceremonies or MCs are the hosts to the Kostume Kult Experience.

You are the first Kostume Kult member they see when they walk by our frontage.

Kostume Kult's mission is to take regular burners and transform them in a one of a kind individual through the art of costuming.

When a burner gets pulled from the crowd by our wranglers, they wait in line for up to an hour to get into the costume tent. Waiting that long under the unforgiving sun of Black Rock Desert is tough; that is when we come in.

The MC keeps the line entrained and encourages new costume individuals to radically express themselves down the runway. Keep it light hearted and only playful ribbing. Compliment their new costume and keep the party moving. Hold dance contests, draw a lucky winner out of the line, use Express Passes (More info ahead), tell moving stories about how costumes change lives. Have Fun!

***LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!  
BOYS AND GIRLS! CHILDREN OF ALL AGES! WELCOME  
TO KOSTUME KULT! YOUR NUMBER ONE COSTUMING  
EXPERIENCE IN DOWNTOWN BLACK ROCK CITY!  
STEP RIGHT UP! COME CLOSER, YOU WON'T BELIEVE  
YOUR EYES! COME EXPLORE OUR COSTUME TENT WHICH  
IS FULL OF WONDERS AND FILLED WITH TREASURES YOU  
CAN WEAR AND TAKE WITH YOU! THIS SHOW IS NOT TO  
BE MISSED!***



## REQUIREMENTS TO BE AN MC

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- ♦ Being able to withstand the Black Rock City sun for hours.
- ♦ Being comfortable on stage, in front of a large crowd, talking into a microphone.
- ♦ Some improvisational skills, a fast sense of humor, and witty banter with other MCs, regardless of whether you have worked with that person before or not.
- ♦ Feeling comfortable with personal interactions with people. Not everyone knows personal boundaries and in the excitement of the moment they may try to dance on you. Of course it's OK to make a polite exit.
- ♦ Know your limits as many people will offer you drinks. It's always OK to decline to keep your skills sharp out there.

# DUTIES OF THE MC

- ◆ Keep the frontage of Costume Kult interesting and inviting.
- ◆ Keep the whole experience safe for everybody
- ◆ Entertained, engage and keep the people waiting in line interested and excited to be there.
- ◆ Announce and comment on the people coming out from the costume station and through the runway displaying their new fashions.
- ◆ Never allow there to be dead air (nobody talking) on the speakers for more than a minute. Take turns with your fellow MC if you need a break.
- ◆ Compliment, compliment, compliment!



## **Never EVER curse or use foul language.**

We are a mostly a family friendly camp. There will be children with their families waiting to get a costume. We do not want to be crass or indecent.

## **Never make a guest feel less than fabulous when they walk in your runway.**

We know that sometimes people walk out of the costume tent with just a hat, or necklace, still looking the same way the look when they walked in, but in their mind, they already went through a transformation, and is our duty as MCs to point out that incredible transformation.

## **Never make a guest feel uncomfortable.**

Having a microphone gives you a lot of power, and people who come on stage to play with you will do pretty much anything you ask them too, you must know how to read body language, and know what are the limits of each individual.

## **Do not go negative.**

This is not a roast; only real experts can pull off negative humor. That's not what we are about and we've had a few bad experiences in that regard.





## **SEXY IS NOT SEXUAL**

Always be playful with your audience, but know the difference between being sexy and being sexual. You might want to be extra playful with a sexy burner on stage, and feel free to do so, but you must know how to read your guest body language, and be aware if your playfulness is making him/her uncomfortable. People on stage are nervous and excited and your goal should never be to use your microphone powers to objectify and manipulate beautiful people to your pleasing.

Consent is sexy!

# REGULAR LINES USED BY THE MC.

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Add your flair to our runway! If you need some suggested talking points, there are some lines that we repeat through the day

These lines are the general ideas, feel free to use your own words, but get these messages across:

## **"You have to wear it to own it"**

Just one costume per guest. People cannot walk out of the costume tent carrying at many costumes and they can or want. Guest can only walk away with the costume they are wearing when they step out into the runway.

This rule is ignored on our last day, as we actually encourage people to walk away with all they can carry.

We do not want to bring back home tons of unwanted costumes.







**“If you see something you love,  
consider giving it to the person  
next to you”**

This concept reinforces the Burning Man principle of “Radical Inclusion”. We encourage people to share and to gift.

**“You will NOT find what you are looking for at Kostume Kult... You will find something better” or “We don’t have what you want, we have what you need”**

Sometimes people will ask for a specific look, most likely we will not have exactly what they want. We will remind them that what ever look they had in mind, was not as awesome as the look they will find in the costume tent.

**“No kakis / No cargos / No jeans”**

This is a basic Kostume Kult rule. If you spot somebody walking by our camp, waiting in line, or in the audience wearing any of these items, pull them out, bring them on stage and playfully remind them Kostume Kult camp golden rule. Then hold their hand and take them directly into the costume tent. If the are embarrassed or you sense they really don’t like this attention find someone else.

If somebody walks out of the costume them still wearing any of these items, remind them again our golden rule and see if they want to go back to the tent and try again.



## OTHER SUGGESTED LINES

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These are not mandatory, but they are fun to use.

### **“My stage, my rules!”**

Well, not really. You might hear some MCs using this line now and then, usually when they are playing with audience members who were pull on stage. Although it is your show, you must follow the rules in this guide. You can have it your way, but don't get crazy.

## **"Costuming changed my life!"**

Tell a heart felt story, something moving or perhaps exaggerated. Be silly explaining how costuming changed your life and it can change others too.

## **"Hippies Hydrate", "Hippies, Dust Mask on!"**

Sometimes the crowd is so entertained by the MC they forget to hydrate. Remind those hippies they need water every once in a while. Same goes if a dust storm hits Costume Kult; these hippies need your guidance!



## **EXPRESS PASS**

Now and then, usually when you are running out of dialog, the MC will call out to the costume tent attendants and ask for an Express Pass.

An attendant will bring out a hand picked costume (Usually a one piece or a costume that can be wore with no accessories) and after showing it to the audience with much fanfare they will ask who wants to skip the line and take this costume.

There always will be one or more volunteers. This is where the fun part comes. Play with that volunteer, make them earn the right to skip the line. Dare them to do something funny or interesting. Hand them the costume once you are satisfy with their performance. Remember, we are entertaining the public.

# RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER RULES

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## **Keep Esplanade Ave free of bikes.**

Many people biking by Costume Kult will stop on their tracks and watch the show, right in the middle of the Esplanade Ave. If we have a large audience, many people on bikes will start flocking in front of our camp. Blocking Esplanade Ave goes against Black Rock City laws; if the rangers or state police consider the clumps of bikes a violation of city ordinance, they will shut us down until the avenue is clear.

Keep an eye on Esplanade Ave, and kindly remind people on bikes in front of our camp to either park somewhere safe to watch the show or keep it moving!



### **Children don't wait in line.**

Children up to 13 years old do not wait in line. If you spot a kid in the audience, walk over them and offer them to jump the line and go into the tent directly. Kids are more susceptible to the heat and should not be waiting in the sun for that long.

### **Learn the name of your DJ.**

If you know the name of your DJ before hand, you can ask the your DJ for specific music, depending on the situation.

Before you shift starts, go introduce yourself to the DJ and politely ask him to play along with you while you are working.

### **Learn the name of your fellow MCs.**

This is important! You will be bouncing jokes and comments off your fellow MCs. Just as with DJs, introduce yourself at the beginning of your shift. Get to know your fellow campers!

### **Remind the audiences of your name**

Being on stage that long makes you a small celebrity (Take your 15 minutes while you can). Remind the audience of your name now and then. It will pay off later on when you are roaming playa and people recognize you and can call you by name.

### **Audience members hitting on you.**

Being on stage makes you look very attractive, is like being a bartender or a DJ on a popular club. Many people will hit on you, dance on you, or even try to kiss you. If you do not like it, politely remind the person of consent, walk away or simply tell them "No!"

Remember that you are not alone; if an audience member is being inappropriate with you or others, call upon your fellow MCs and we will help you diffuse the situation or get the appropriate help from the Rangers.

## **Hydrate Constantly**

MCs are under the desert sun for up to 3 hours straight. Keep a bottle of water handy. I usually keep mine under the stage. Also, every time you reach for your water bottle, remind the audience to also drink some water. ("Hippies, hydrate!")

## **Drinking while on duty**

Drink on stage at your own discretion. Many times people will offer you alcohol. Remember, you are having fun but you are also under the baking sun. Nobody wants to see an incoherent drunk screaming into a microphone. Be responsible for your own experience.

## **What to wear**

The MC is the first Kostume Kult member that burners will see when they walk by our camp. Wear a nice costume. Wear a colorful costume. You are representing the camp and our mission. The sexiness level of your costume is up to you. Keep in mind that you will be exposed to the elements for hours so wear something comfortable and fresh. Sunblock is your friend.

## **No shows/ Late for your shift**

It is normal to get stage fright and decide at the last minute that you don't want to be talking into a microphone in front of 200 + people for 3 straight hours.

Please make sure to cover your shift. If you are late for shift or you just don't show up, you are forcing the MC before you to stay longer, and they already being on stage, under the sun, talking to an audience for hours. Please be responsible and be fair to your fellow MCs.

Failing to show up for an MC shift will ban you from ever taking an MC shift again.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

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Above all these guidelines, you must have fun while you are entertaining people. If you are not having fun, it will show and the audience will notice.

If you are new to MCing at Costume Kult, watch the other MC's, don't simply assume that your humor is better. Collaborate with your fellow MCs, DJs and wranglers, and always make everybody feel special.

Find your voice and make the show your own. Most of the fun on being on stage with other MCs is our different styles and ways to keep our guest entertained.

So if you are ready to be a star, go on and put some make up, wear a cool costume and come on up meet us on stage!





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