



Do You Really Need A Manager?

A manager may be something that you want, but not something you REALLY need.

It's 2021 and you want to level up on your artist project. You have a solid back catalogue of music that you are proud of, you want to make big moves in the industry and go out, find and smash every opportunity available to you. You want to make a career out of your music.

As an artist, the feeling of coming into your own and being ready for the next steps in your development is not only a great feeling but is a great position to be in within your career journey. Generally, decisions made within these periods play a significant role in your processes and overall development as an artist. Understanding the correct time to engage industry professionals such as management and take up offers of other industry professionals reaching out to you is an important skill to master.

Let's start off as we always do, stating that every individual is different and depending on who you are, what strengths and weaknesses you have and the time you spend on your development are all things to consider when in search of a manager. It is important to remember that as the artist you should ALWAYS be in the driver's seat of your project and have the final say on matters that concern you and your project.

To begin, an artist manager is essentially the business gatekeeper within an artist team. They handle negotiations, source opportunities and organise the many other business affairs as the main delegator / mediator / communicator with booking agents, record labels, publishers, distributors, PR companies etc. They are also responsible for providing guidance to the artist on their development and should have critical knowledge about the project messaging and goals, intimate knowledge about the industry as a whole and possess a fierce belief in the artist they are representing. A manager provides a service in order for the artist to focus all of their attention on their music and the creative processes.

With the above being said, it is often the attitude of artists that getting management is a quick fix to grow in the industry faster, when in reality, all they are doing is handballing the admin of their brand to an outside source. This can have a detrimental impact to your artist project, as you stop developing your industry knowledge which can lead to feeling a loss of control further into your journey.

"I have got some hype, it's time to get a manager."

"I don't know how to do social media, it's time to get a manager."

"I don't know enough about the music industry, it's time to get a manager."

The above quotes are ones we hear from new artists almost daily and it would be remiss of us not to challenge them to think deeper around the reasons why they would actually need management. If you are an artist who is currently in this position we implore you to ask yourself these questions:

1. Do you have the time to commit to working on the administration side of your brand, but use poor time management as an excuse for procrastinating?
2. Do you want a manager because you think it's a cool flex?
3. Are you doing this purely to save yourself from having to understand the processes of the industry and handball that side of it to an outside source?

If the answer to the above is YES, then we would challenge you to seriously reconsider your stance on whether it is vital to get management. Referring back to one of our previous articles [The Right Time To Get A Manager](#) we go into extreme detail for when we believe the right time to seek out management is. Put simply, when the administration side of your project is starting to affect the creative side, and you actually do not have the time to allocate, then it's time to take that step. Outside of that, we believe that management teams should actually be approaching you as an artist rather than the other way around.

In our experience, managing our artists, we have found that it is beneficial to have a prior relationship with them, or at the least work with them in other capacities prior to signing on the dotted line. This allows both the artist and the manager to understand work flows, attitudes and general direction. In the long run, it gives wider context to both parties about how the relationship will work and flourish. We believe that it is also worthwhile (and beneficial) to have an agreed upon trial period, to again gain clarity on how you work together. We see it all too often where artists are so excited to be noticed by a well known institution and jump into a deal before gathering all of the facts - then, that artist is left vulnerable and without guidance if things do not work out. Having a trial period also allows you, as an artist, to understand what your manager is actually capable of in terms of gaining opportunities, delegating tasks etc.

"I was lucky enough to have seen the perspective of both sides, as an artist back in the day and now as an artist manager. Management should be vision based, if you are looking into management and your prospective manager does not have the same values / share a similar vision as you for your project - then the answer is simple, for both sides."- Anthony Agostino, Cartel Management.

In our current climate, where music is such an accessible medium, it's also reasonable to be self managed. If you believe you have the drive to handle both business & creativity and can balance them accordingly - that is awesome. Whatever kind of artist you are, please remember to consider all of the facts and see the situation from the other parties perspective before making a decision that is best for YOU.