



When is the best time to get management?

The role of management + Do you need a manager in your current position?

Having the business name *Cartel Management*, a lot of our initial interactions with artists begins with their interest in joining our management roster. The topic of this article is to discuss the right time to actually sign on the dotted line with a manager / management company. We also want to write about what to consider when signing up, as well as defining exactly what the role of a manager is.

Let's start by actually describing what a manager does / what they should be doing to help develop your artist brand and project. Please note, that if you are currently in a situation where your manager does not openly perform the following for you, our advice would be to consider how valuable they actually are in your team and make a decision accordingly on whether or not you continue to work with them. It is also 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.

Ok, now we have that out of the way, let's talk about what managers do. An artist manager is essentially the business gatekeeper for their musicians. They handle negotiations and other business affairs of an artist or band. Since the musician needs to focus all of their attention into the creative process, the artist manager serves as the main delegator / mediator / communicator for 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 its growth. With all that being said, they are also responsible for seeking out as many opportunities that will benefit the project / align with project goals and ultimately provide assistance in the development of the project.

Most managers work on a percentage basis with their artists, meaning that they take an agreed upon percentage fee for each of the areas of the artists earnings. Each manager relationship is different, although the earnings can be from things like; mechanical / master royalties, publishing, live performances, brand alignments etc. The incentive for a manager to be as productive as possible (apart from wanting to be a part of the artist development journey) is that they only receive payment, if the artist is also getting paid.

Now that we have a clear understanding of the role and the incentive of a manager, we can dive further into the right time to start thinking about management for your artist project. As with most artist journeys, we must mention that every situation is different and there is no strict right or wrong answer when it comes to the right time. In our experience, managing our artists, we have found that it is beneficial to have a prior relationship with the artist, 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.

When entering into a relationship like this, it is so crucial for you to consider what the motivations and incentives are of your prospective management. What do they get out of working with you? More often than not monetary profit doesn't always come straight away, if at all, so their motivation for jumping on board with your artist project needs to be deeper. They need to be your biggest fans and they need to believe in you.

Remember this is your career, so it's also reasonable to ask questions.

- How big is the management roster?
- How many artists on the roster are similar to me? If so, will that hinder my chances at gaining opportunities?
- Do they have prior experience in the music industry? (*This is vital because part of a manager's job is utilising contacts to achieve growth for their clients.*)
- Are their ideas beneficial for YOUR vision of the artist brand?

Taking all of the above into consideration and considering all of the facts surrounding your artist brand, only you know when it's the right time to start delegating some of your roles. In our opinion when the 'admin' side of your brand begins to over take the 'creative' side of your brand and you truly do not have enough hours in the day, then it may be time to source a manager. Apart from that rare circumstance, we firmly believe that management should really be approaching you rather than the other way around. It shows that they believe in what you are doing. You are also more than likely at a point where they feel they can benefit your project to align with your goals, as well as them being real fans of your music.

In this 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.