



CARTEL MANAGEMENT AUSTRALIA

### **Building Your Team.**

*Putting the right people around you, to help your project grow.*

Independent artists who are looking to create financially sustainable music projects are almost always required to balance, and understand, a myriad of roles and responsibilities. Balancing all of these hats is something that few artists can achieve on their own. The purpose of this month's article is to discuss the importance of independent artists building their team. Focussing on the who, what, when, why and how, of creating a like-minded team with a focus on one shared goal.

As we always do, we must begin this with a note, that if you are an artist that has no interest outside of the creation of the music, then the topic of this article is not for you.

Also before moving forward, we need to be extremely clear that building out a team in certain parts of your project isn't a cure for artist laziness. We speak with artists quite often who explain to us that they need a manager / booking agent or some other resource to simply pick up on the roles the artist doesn't want to do themselves, or, even further, have the opinion that once they gain one of these resources in their team that they are 'set' and will become successful quickly. Thinking in the above ways is a sure fire way to become jaded by the industry and will ensure that you will not make a career out of your art.

Surrounding your project with the 'right' people who are experts in their field can become a vital part of development but is not crucial. With the rise of the streaming, independent distributors and resources available to independent artists, it has never been a better time to be a self-managed artist. Although very admirable and cost effective, our advice to self managed artists is that (at a certain point) every artist needs assistance.

Below is a fairly basic list of areas of the industry that artists can look to build into their team.

#### RECORD COMPANIES (INDEPENDENT / MAJOR):

The most common difference between major and independent record companies is that major labels are global and operate their own publishing and distribution companies, indie labels work with other smaller companies, either in long-term partnerships or in smaller contractual relationships for their distribution and publishing needs.

With the above in mind, having any form of label backing really depends on the resources available to you. Our advice will always be, only go down a recording route if the label can not only offer, but deliver, on things that you cannot do yourself.

The accessibility to be able to become an artist these days rival the simple purposes that a label can offer. So the incentive to even build a label team around you needs to be outside of what you can do yourself.

*-You can distribute music yourself*

*-You can PR / market yourself - or alternatively outsource to a PR/marketing specific company*

*-You can upload to sync agents / publishing outside of a record deal.*

For more information on Label vs. Independent please read our previous article [here](#).

#### BOOKING AGENTS:

The role of a booking agent is fairly straightforward, they are responsible for the facilitation of artist shows and touring. Whether that be liaising with venues, promoters, artist managers (for support slots) etc. a booking agent is responsible for the live side of the project. Again, it is important to note that before moving into a relationship with a booking agent, the artist project should already have some leverage (previous ticket sales, streaming success, an active and engaged audience). A booking agent essentially sells the merit of a project to promoters and venues, and if there is no prior leverage to work with, a booking agent will not be much help to you at all.

#### MANAGEMENT:

Management should really be the last part of the puzzle. An artist manager is essentially the business gatekeeper within an artist team. They handle negotiations, source opportunities and organize 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 project to an outside source. This can sometimes 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.

For more information on management roles / when to consider getting a manager read the article [here](#).

#### ACCOUNTING:

As an artist, or even artist representative you are not, and should not, be expected to be a financial guru. Understanding what to claim, tax, GST, an invoicing process and profit and loss are all things there is support for and in the spirit of creating processes in every area of the 'business', an accountant can help for multiple reasons.

Getting an accountant can take a lot of the pressure of the above tasks and can actually implement strategies with you or at the very least help you understand the roadmap to create sustainability. Accountants are often one of the last resources that a lot of artists think of when creating an artist project, but are precisely the mechanism to help the project become financially sustainable. As experts in their field, it allows the artist to still have control, but be able to prioritize other parts of the project.

#### OUTSOURCING / PR - MARKETING - PRODUCERS - MIX MASTER ETC.

Depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the artist project a fairly vital part of being self managed or even having a team around the project is to outsource on a service-based basis.

As an artist it is really important for you to understand that if you wish to operate with these types of businesses with the goal of furthering your artist project, that you will incur a cost for the service. Just like paying a mechanic to service your car, paying for an artist service is an investment in the betterment of your brand. The first step in

this process is understanding what you need in order to grow and what areas of growth you cannot do alone. From there you are able to prioritise where to best invest your money. Please note that if you do not have access to the money with which to invest in services like this, that is ok, but we would advise you to spend some time researching best practices and build up those skills yourself first.