



## **The Truth About Artist Management.**

*Their role, common misconceptions, and the risk associated.*

The purpose of this article is to discuss the role, responsibilities, risk, and misconceptions of artist management. Before we dive into the thick of this, it is important for us to note that everything that we write in every article comes from our experience as managers and also from Anthony's position as a former artist. The intention of this particular article is a little different to previous ones regarding management. If you wish to know more about the right time to get a manager or whether you actually need one at all, please refer to our previous articles: [Right To Get a Manager](#) & [Do You Really Need a Manager?](#)

Defining the role of an artist manager is not a simple task, as managers do often take on areas of the project that are lacking (i.e. PR / Digital / design) which do not fit within the specific role of what a manager is there to do. The role of an artist manager is to essentially be 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.

*In short:- if your artist project is the overall business, an artist manager is the CEO.*

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. When connecting with and signing an artist manager, it is also up to the artist to continue developing their industry knowledge, artist contact base and create artist goals and objectives (with their management) that the team will continually strive towards - this will ensure that yourself as an artist will never feel a loss of control over your own project.

Again, speaking from experience in the areas of an manager, artists need to understand that (if done properly) **the job of a manager is actually extremely difficult.** They are very often underappreciated and undervalued, often unfairly judged, have to remain ahead of trends in areas they are (sometimes) not experts in, and are more often than not expected to take on roles within the project that do not fall under their purview.

So what makes an artist manager want to work with a particular artist? In all honesty, it's egotistical and straight up silly of a 'local' artist to think that managers are money hungry, because in reality artist projects at that level generate very little to no profit (although there are some exceptions to this); for the most part managers only earn a small percentage of what the artist earn, and if the artist earns nothing, so does the manager. The incentive of a manager never really begins in a financial mindset. Keep in mind that as a standard in the AU/NZ territory a manager's financial take from artists is 15-25% of agreed upon artists earnings (depending on the deal). So for a

project that is not currently sustainable financially, that earns 0.003cents a stream every quarter in royalties from APRA/AMCOS and distribution, a 15% take is not a very good business plan.

Adding to the above, most artist managers quite often need to work in other areas of the industry / earn other sources of income, as the management act they are spending their time on is not generating financial return on investment. We here at Cartel are a prime example of this; yes we do earn a percentage of our management roster's income but it is in no way the only source of income in our business. We have two other sectors in our business (seperate to management) that allow us to invest our time into our management acts. The idea is that over a longer period of time the return on our time investment will eventually grow into financial gain for all parties involved.

When entering into an artist management agreement, it is the role of an artist to understand the role of their manager / what they are capable of / the management time and expectations look like moving forward. Any good manager will make artists extremely aware of expectations and the resources available to them and from there, develop a formal plan to grow. A manager's job is not to take on all of the parts of the artist project that the artist doesn't want to do (i.e social media, audience engagement etc). As artists, YOU need to take control of the project and drive the vision forward, a manager is just there to add structure and process.

As management generally has other areas of responsibility to bring in income, artists need to become more structured in regards to when they have access to a manager, as time is the most important asset in the relationship between management & artist. Most relationships break down when there is no clear boundary around contact / work times. Artists often have the feeling of not being prioritised by management, due to lack of response from the other end, and although this is not okay, the communication breakdown isn't actually the lack of response, it is the lack of understanding the priorities of the other party.

Using our own relationships with management clients as an example, our artists are very clear on the modes of communication that work best for us and vice versa, this makes for a more streamlined approach to growth. There is also a spoken understanding between us and our management roster around how / when we are available to them. Artists not having to feel as though they need to follow up their own representation is massive, the artist should feel as though their management are working at the optimum level. The only way to do this is through communication.

To end this article, if you're asking the question of yourself as to whether you need management, go back and understand what their role actually is, and then try and understand if there is anyone in your professional orbit that has the resource / relationship with you to take on such a role. Nine times out of ten, artists will discover that they don't actually need it.

ARTISTS INNOVATE - MANAGERS MANAGE