

Getting an Agent or Manager

There is a difference between an agent and a manager and it's important to work out which you actually need.

In very simple terms:

Agents take a programme or programmes of music from a given artist and encourage promoters to book them. They will do this via marketing, personal contacts, industry knowledge and a little bit of luck. Once they have secured a booking they will then administer the contract for the performance, negotiate the fee on your behalf and liaise with the promoter so you can focus on the performance rather than the administration of the performance. For this service you can expect to pay the agent a commission of anywhere between 10-20% of the net income from booked performances.

Managers will usually do all of the above plus offer a range of other advisory services such as legal help, PR liaison, social media management, record deals, arranging transportation and visas for work abroad, collecting your laundry etc. For this you can expect to pay between 15-25% of your gross income, not necessarily just from the work they bring in for you.

When trying to engage an agent or manager it is important to see things from their perspective. The reason you will be seeking representation is probably to get more work. However, if you aren't currently doing a lot of performances representatives will be less inclined to take you on as they can't see where their income will be coming from. This can create something of a Catch 22 situation. If you don't have many performances booked in the diary, as well as following all the previous advice, you can do the following to try to increase your chances of securing representation:

1. Approach agents and managers with a very clear outline of the next two years' worth of plans focussing specifically on how these performances will work financially as well as artistically. They are a business so signing you has to be financially viable for them.
2. Some agents work within one specific genre, others across a range. Make sure you contact ones who represent the main areas you work within.

Don't give up. Just because one company doesn't see your value doesn't mean another won't. There are thousands of agents and managers to contact and an up-to-date list can be found on the [International Artist Managers' Association website](#).