

Service Companies and Agencies

Learners should consider what **equipment** might be needed and what might be **available** from **service companies and agencies**. Consideration should be given to service companies and agencies and how their products support the music industry and why they are important and the **pros** and **cons** for musicians of working with agencies.

Even the smallest show needs the services of others to exist and as shows get more and more technical, service companies can get more and more specialised.

It is important to understand **who** does what and **how** they can help.

Artists' Representation

Imagine yourself as a music artist or band. In what ways would you like to be represented? What services would you want done for you?

Stylists



Target Audience



What's wrong with this picture?



What do stylists do?









Better???



Scenario 1

Your band is highly successful with numerous large gigs sold out and upcoming TV appearances. Your band has been approached by a top fashion designer who is desperate for you to wear their latest threads and trends. Explain **two advantages** and **disadvantages** of wearing products from the top fashion designer. Complete the table below filling in either the point / feature or the explanation of that same point.

	<u>Point / feature</u>	<u>Explain</u>
<u>Advantages</u>		and so the band will be able to buy better equipment, promotion and other services
	The top fashion designer has a large following of their products.....	
<u>Disadvantages</u>		The audiences may be filled with people who aren't appropriate to the type of music being played and therefore dislike the performance
	The top fashion designer might be in the press for negative reasons.....	

PR (Public Relations)



Public Relations (PR) Agencies are responsible for creating an image for the group, artist or business they are representing. This process begins by evaluating the public's perception or image of the client. From this the PR agency might find that the client is well known, but has a poor image among the general public. If the client is just getting started in the business, the Public Relations agency must build the client's image from scratch.

To develop effective campaigns the P.R. agency must know how to write press releases, assemble press kits, and arrange press conferences. To be successful with their campaigns the agency must know how to find an interesting angle that the public will buy into. To do this P.R. agencies usually spend a lot of time getting to know clients, and uncovering any important information that might allow them to find the proper way image to present. For example, a singer may have had a really tough road to success including a tough childhood, but now has flourished as a star in the music business. The agency could capitalise on this fact, and work to give the public a better understanding of the singer. This may make the singer appear more "human" and more appealing to the general public.

Successful P.R. agencies usually have many media contacts to call upon when they need to generate excitement among the press for their clients. Those who work in public relations must be able to work under a lot of pressure, because there are constant demands by clients, and many deadlines that must be met. Usually the PR Agency reports to his or her supervisor, and sometimes he or she might report directly to the client. The Agency works in a radio station, then he or she would report to the station General Manager.

Oftentimes the Public Relations Agency works behind the scenes, not receiving any recognition for much of hard work. On the other side, an unsuccessful campaign will often lead to an unhappy client who blames the Public Relations Agency for their troubles.

Salaries: Depending on the firm or company, geographical location, and type of job held, salaries will vary for the Agency. One can expect to earn anywhere from \$35,000 to \$200,000 plus per year. The Agency can also expect to earn 10% to 15% of all income from the new clients they bring to the firm.

A Public Relations Agency or Director at a radio station might make between £22,000 and £40,000 and possibly more at a larger station. A Public Relations Agency or Director working at a concert hall or auditorium can expect to earn about the same.

Definition:

Music PR – press relations – is the promoting of a new release, tour or other music related news to the media. People who work in PR liaise between labels and/or musicians and the media to try and get album reviews, profiles of the band, reviews of live shows and so on. Most music PR companies have a dedicated focus – for instance, they only do print media or they only do radio. Some are divided even further, in that they only do college and club radio promotion or they only promote to websites.

Most music PR is done on a campaign basis. If a label wants to promote a new release, they may hire a PR company for a set window of time, during which the PR Company will try to generate as much press as possible. If the band will be touring during that time. Sometimes the PR firm will also do a round of press for the tour, or sometimes they will charge an extra for that (especially in the case of large PR firms/large record labels). At the end of the campaign, the PR Company will issue a report with press clippings of all of the coverage the album has received. They may report at intervals during the campaign as well.

Hiring a PR company can be a great thing. When you're working with an established PR company, then you know that first hurdle - the building of press contacts - has already been tackled. An envelope bearing the logo of a well known PR company can carry a lot of weight at a magazine that received hundreds of promos a day. Working with these companies can be extraordinarily expensive, however, and there is no guarantee of any pay off. Some PR campaigns end with exactly zilch in the way of press, but you still have to pay the bill. For this reason, small labels should think carefully about PR - much of it could be done in-house, so only hiring a PR company when you think you have something that could really get a lot of press is a good plan.

Also Known As: Press Relations, Publicity, Promotion, Plugging (especially in the case of radio)

Task

Headlines

Summarise PR Agencies into 3 short headlines

2. _____

3.



Task

Job Advert

Use the information on the previous pages to write your own **job advert** for a **PR agency**. You should put yourself in the position of an **upcoming band**. Consider what you would want the PR agency to do for you (**responsibilities**)?. What **skills** will they need to have? How long will the campaign last? What **other information** will they need?

REQUIRED:

PR Company to work with up and coming band

Location:

Salary:

Contract:

Starting date:

Key
Responsibilities

Essential Skills

Other information

Artist Management

The following is an interview with Simon Banks, founder of SB Management, based in Shepherd's Bush, who **manages** several music artists. He describes a regular working day as an **Artist Manager**:



What is the role of a music manager?

"You are the oil in a multi-part machine, where you're kind of the mid-point between the artist and everything else.

"The idea is that everything else comes to you before it goes to the artist, and everything from the artist comes to you before it goes to everyone else. And if everyone does his or her job exceptionally well, then the manager's job should be reasonably straightforward.

"A lot of the time is spent double-checking that people have: sent contracts, sent schedules so that the artist knows what time they're getting picked up, all that kind of thing.

"I started off in my bedroom doing this, so I've kind of done everything from carrying the guitar up to negotiating the deals. I'm lucky enough that I've got people who work in my office.

"So my job now entails not so much running around, not so much making sure people know it's an 8 o'clock pickup or their haircut's happening at this time. I've got people who do that, which is very lucky."

What is your average day like?

"Today I got up at about 8 o'clock, and the first thing I do is check my Blackberry, I check my phone and answer any e-mails that have come in overnight.

"My main job is dealing with the artists and their mental and creative welfare. I have a meeting at the label later on because there's a launch party tonight for an album, so I'm just going to make sure that everything's OK, that all the VIPs are going to be there as planned.

"This afternoon I'll be going to HMV in Oxford Street, where there's a performance, and then on to the launch party tonight.

"Last week, Monday I went to Glasgow for a launch party, Tuesday I went to San Francisco for about six hours for the launch of the new iPod. And then got on a plane back and was in the office for two days doing meetings and budgets and all that kind of thing. No two days are the same, basically. Ever.

What important skills do you need to be an artist's manager?

"I think the ability to spin plates is probably a pretty important skill. And not flapping – just keeping calm, not being fazed by anything.

"There's a lot of drama in this industry, there's a lot of people who are incredibly dramatic and who will ring you up and go, 'Oh my god, if you don't do this, her career is over.'

"You've kind of just got to take a deep breath and go, 'OK, what are the facts of this situation and what are the possible outcomes?' So I guess being a diplomat is a huge part of my job.

"My skills have come from doing a little bit of everything, which, although I didn't realise it at the time, is exactly what I needed to be a good manager.

"I used to be in bands, as a musician, as a keyboard player, and was in loads of different orchestras at school. I am very musical, and that enables me to talk to an artist with some kind of credibility and to say, 'You know what? When that chorus ends on that chord instead of that chord, then it doesn't quite work.'

"I can say it with confidence and I'm not just going 'Oh, it doesn't sound like a hit' and sounding like an industry bod."

How do you get into the music industry?

"I got expelled from public school when I was just about to take my A-levels. So in a way, that was my first career move.

"Then I went to university and did sound engineering, music technology and music business studies for a year at Kingston University.

"If you want to be a manager, I would try and find a course where it's a little bit of everything."

"There I learnt about how a studio works, and frequencies and EQs and Cubase and Logic and all those sorts of things."

"The music business side? I guess the one thing I learnt was that it's incredibly vague and incredibly fluid. It's not like other businesses. If you want to be a manager, I would try and find a course where it's a little bit of everything."

"I mean, the sound engineering side – in the same way that because I'm musical I can talk about song structure, I can go into a studio and say 'That hasn't been mixed yet' or 'That hasn't been mastered yet' or 'Is that just a guide vocal?' All these questions where I actually know what I'm talking about."

What is the value of work experience?

"When I was at university, I wrote off to every single record company, Management Company, publishing company, recording studio, saying 'I will come and work for free, I just want some experience.'"

"And a company called Ricochet Management said 'Great, come in, do it.' So I was going in there one day a week while I was at university, just photocopying and making the tea, really, and emptying the bins."

"Then they asked me to do a budget, which... I didn't even know what a budget was. They said 'Oh, just list the costs of something.'"

"And apparently I did it so well that they offered me the bookkeeping job, which was incredible, because I knew nothing about bookkeeping."

"That's where the blagging side of being in the industry comes. You have to go 'OK, I've never done this before, but I'm sure it'll be fine.'"

To watch the full interview go to:

First part: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHWaPaUUKuo>

Second part: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yllwt-FbKuM>

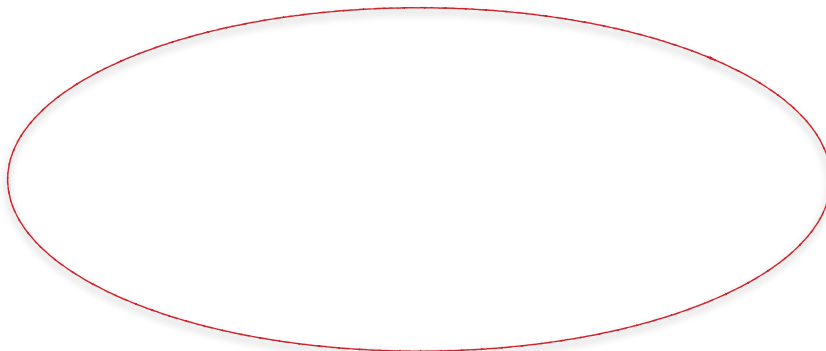
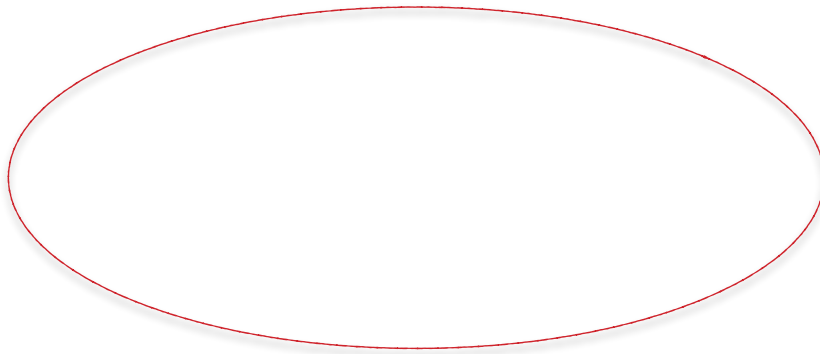


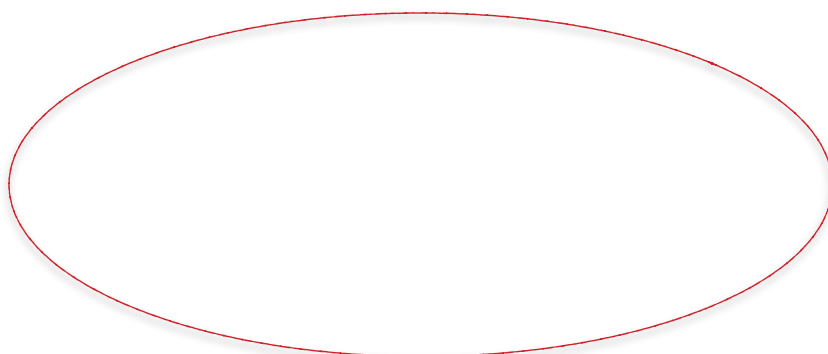
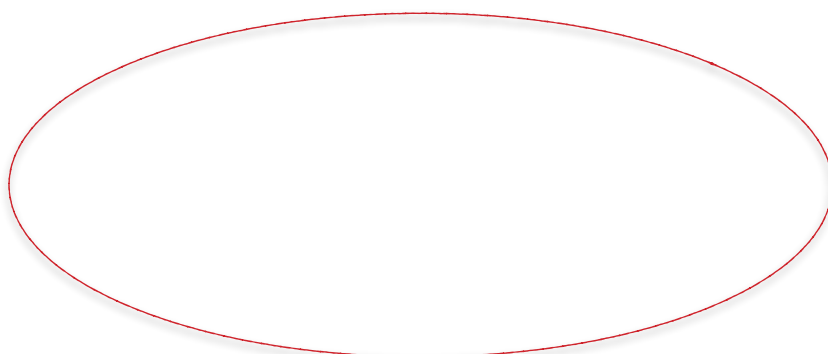
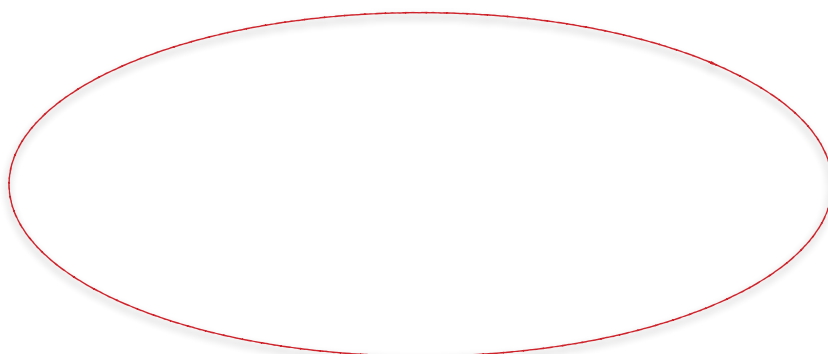
Task

Headlines Mindmap

Read the transcript of the interview with an artist manager. Identify **five key** points made in the interview on the **responsibilities** of **artist management** and write in each oval. Expand on each point to create a mind map. **Consider:**

- ★ What skills are important for this responsibility
- ★ Why would an artist want a manager to carry out this task?
- ★ How is it carried out in the most efficient way?
- ★ Compare how important it is in relation to other processes in the music industry





Booking Agents

The following is an interview with International Creative Management, one of the largest talent agencies in the United States, who describe the **responsibilities** and **requirements** of **booking agents**

Describe your role as a music agent (booking agent):

"For me, the simplest definition of a music agent is 'a person who books live personal appearances for musicians or bands.' But there's a lot more to being a music-booking agent than just that. For example, we also can negotiate contracts to bring the band other types of work, such as radio or television appearances, or appearances in commercials and finding sponsors for tours."

"Even booking a club or concert performance takes more than a phone call and a signed contract. An agent becomes familiar with concert venues and builds relationships with concert promoters to book bands into the places that'll best showcase their talents."

"It's important for us to know the ins and outs of negotiating contracts and work to secure the best deal for their bands. In addition, agents work on tour routes, planning schedules that make sense physically and financially."

"Music agents receive a percentage of the band's revenue from a performance. Because of that, I'll usually want to work with groups that I know will bring in an audience or have a recording company's support. Sometimes, though, I will take a risk on a group that I think has the potential to become popular."

"We work closely with promoters, those who 'put on the show', and handle all the arrangements.

Fine details like lighting, sound, meals, hotel accommodations, transportation and even snack food are all handled by bookers for their artists."



What's a typical day like for a music agent?

- ✓ Clear voice mails and e-mails, starting about 10 a.m.
- ✓ Make calls to concert promoters in a specific geographic region to give a band's available dates for shows.
- ✓ Create a route for the tour and place holds on venues in the markets you want.
- ✓ Gather offers from promoters, which include the money for the band and performance details.
- ✓ Review the offers with the band's manager and the regional booking agent.
- ✓ Decide which deals to accept, which to pass on and which to accept after working out details.
- ✓ Continue until all tours are booked or the workday ends.
- ✓ Spend most evenings attending client performances or checking out new bands. Talk to new bands' managers and record company contacts.

"With those kind of hours, you need to have a real passion for music to be a successful music agent."

Task

Key points

Read the transcript of the interview with a **booking agent** above. Also watch the following video:

Interview with Jason Soulliere, junior agent at The Feldman Agency:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpDZ8YwFft4>

Summarise the information into **four key points** for the **responsibilities** of a **booking agent**

1

2

3

4

Task

Explain why effective communication is one of the most important personal qualities of a booking agent / music agent.

Task

Watch the interview given by Marty Salzman, an artist manager based in Chicago. Use bullet points to summarise the differences between an artist's manager and a booking agent/music agent.

<http://www.artistshousemusic.org/videos/managers+vs+agents>

Exam Questions

Artist Representation

Q1. Identify the job role which involves:

- arranging tours
- working with recording companies on behalf of performers
- taking about 20% of all money a performer earns.

1 mark

Q2. Neda is a vocalist and keyboard player. She has been writing songs and recording at home for a while. Neda is now ready to start gigging to promote her music and has booked her first few gigs in small venues.

Give **three** reasons why Neda might hire a manager.

1.

.....

2.

.....

3.

.....

Q3. Who generally negotiates the fee for a band performance?

- ☐ **A** Stylist
- ☐ **B** Booking Agent
- ☐ **C** Manager
- ☐ **D** PR company

Q4. Give two skills or responsibilities a successful booking agent will have,

1.

.....

2.

.....

Q5. The local council has employed a PR company to run a campaign with the hope of improving the image of and also promote the Urban Rockz festival. The council has been approached by a major drinks company who would like to sponsor the festival.

Explain **two positives** and **two negatives** of accepting the offer.

Positives

1.

.....

Negatives

1.

.....

2.

.....

Q6. Matt has been creating his own music for sometime using a mixture of electronic samples and real musical instruments. He has produced a few albums and is popular in the local area. He performs his song in local small venues. Matt wants to spend more time producing his music. If he can increase his income from his music then he can reduce the number of hours he has to work at his part time job

(a) Explain **one positive** and **one negative** of Matt working with a booking agent.

Positive

.....

.....

Negative

.....

.....

(a) Explain **two** possible disadvantages of Matt's music being reviewed by a journalist in a major magazine

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

Make sure you check the guide on how to answer 'explain style' questions in the back of your booklet!!!