



Careers in the Music Business

Careers in Music Business/Management

Personal Manager (or Artist Manager, Agent)

Personal managers represent one or more musical groups or artists and oversee all aspects of an act's career. They deal with and advise the act(s) on all business decisions, as well as many of the creative decisions an artist must make, and attempt to guide the artist's rise to the top.

Booking Agent (or Talent Agent)

Booking agents work to secure performance engagements for musical artists and groups. They work to find talent to book and may be involved with developing the talent toward a goal. They must possess good communication skills to sell talent and develop contacts in the music industry. They often work closely with an act's manager and may be involved in setting the fee and negotiating with promoters or clubs. A booking agent is paid a percentage of the negotiated fee for an act's performance.

Concert Promoter

The concert promoter presents, organizes, advertises, and in many cases, finances concerts at performance venues such as arenas, festivals, clubs, church buildings, auditoriums, etc. The promoter often secures money for the concert by finding others to share in the profits/expenses. However, it is often times the concert promoter who absorbs all the financial risk.

Independent Radio Promoter

The independent radio promoter (IRP) has a similar role as that of a promotional staffer at a record label, except the IRP is usually employed by an independent radio promotions company or works freelance. Often, a record label, artist/band, or manager will hire the services of an independent radio promotions company to generate airplay of a particular song or record.

The IRP contacts radio station program directors, music directors, and disc jockeys in a local, regional, national, or even an international market. They set up appointments with these station people and bring a number of new album releases as well as a supply of promotional or press material relating to the artist or band. An IRP may socialize frequently with program directors and music directors to help improve the chances that a radio station will add a song to its playlist. An IRP often will often take key radio station personnel out to lunch, dinner, or for drinks. They may also bring a program director to a club in order to listen to a group play songs live and gauge audience response.

Entrepreneur (Music Business)

A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a music business venture. Some common businesses started by music entrepreneurs are: recording studio facility, private teaching practice, performing band, booking agency, artist management, music retail, music publishing company, record label, etc.

Retail Sales Management

A retail sales manager works, runs, and operates a retail music store. Duties would include employee supervision, training, ordering, coordinating the timing and arrival of distribution shipments to the store, budgeting and financial planning, and coordinating sales promotions for specific CDs.

Entertainment Attorney

An entertainment attorney handles any contractual matters conceivable within the entertainment industry. Entertainment attorneys can be freelance, hired on retainer, or an employee of a company or business within the entertainment industry. Entertainment attorneys generally specialize in one of three separate fields within the entertainment industry: sports, film and television, and music. An attorney that specializes in the music industry usually has a solid depth of understanding with regard to copyright laws and artist/band agreements with managers, publishers, record labels, booking agents, etc. Successful completion of law school and a state bar exam are requisites for being an entertainment attorney, as well.

Business Manager

The business manager handles the financial affairs of musicians and entertainers. Most have degrees in business administration with concentrations in accounting or management. The business manager should have knowledge of negotiating, accounting skills, investments, and tax laws.

Music Supervisor (Music Licensing/Clearance)

A music supervisor may act as an A&R scout to find and license popular songs (as source music) for a film, TV soundtrack or other media format.

Music Business Consultant

The music business consultant advises his/her clients, who are generally artists, music industry professionals, or entrepreneurs, on music business strategy for their career or business.

Contractor (or Leader)

A contractor is responsible for hiring musicians or road crew staff and tending to all the necessary contract obligations through the appropriate union organizations. It is in the contractor's best interest to procure the best talent possible while working within given budget guidelines.

Record Label Business Careers**Record Company Executive**

This person would usually be employed at a record label and be a director, vice president, or president of any of the various departments or areas therein.

A&R Coordinator

The main duty of the artist & repertoire coordinator is to find talent for the company to sign. A&R coordinators search for new talent by visiting clubs, going to showcases, listening to tapes and demo recordings, and watching recordings of acts performing. He or she is often responsible for helping find songs for the artists signed to the record label.

A&R Administrator

The artist & repertoire administrator works in the Artist & Repertoire Department along with the A&R coordinator. In large companies, the A&R administrators are responsible for clerical functions within the department, planning budgets for artists signed to the label, and working on the annual or semiannual budget for all artists' expenditures. They must analyze previous budgets and prepare a budget proposal with projected cost estimates for recording current acts. They also monitor the budget in relation to the expenses throughout the year. Staying within a budget means that the A&R administrator is doing his or her job. The individual might work exclusively with one or two studios in order to build up a great volume of studio time. With this volume, the A&R administrator can often receive discounts on time. They also keep track of all money spent for recording studio time, session musicians, talent, and miscellaneous expenses.

Director of Publicity (or Public Relations Director)

The director of publicity supervises the record label publicity department and develops and oversees publicity campaigns. As director, this person oversees all the work that is performed by the staff of the department.

Publicist (or Staff Publicist, Press Agent)

A publicist handles the publicity and press needs of acts signed to a label. Publicity helps the label sell records and produce income. A publicist must be able to get an artist's name in the news (magazines, music trades, TV, radio, etc.) as often as possible. This is accomplished by writing press releases, sending them to the correct media, talking to media about acts, and arranging interviews. The publicist often arranges a series of print interviews, radio interviews, and TV appearances in conjunction with the release of a new record. Staff publicists spend a lot of time on the telephone and are usually the first to send out promotional copies of new records and other important materials to the media. After a new record is released, a publicist may work with the A&R or promotional departments on a showcase booking of the group, and make arrangements for a press party.

Assistant Publicist

Assists the publicist, compiling press kits, writing press releases, and double-checking information for accuracy.

Artist Relations Representative (Artist Development Representative)

The artist relations representative's responsibility is to represent the label's interest to the artist/band and the artist/band's interest to the label, and maintain proper communication, cooperation, and mutual understanding between the two entities. This person's job is to make the artist feel appreciated by the label by thoughtful gestures such as buying flowers; writing letters; and arranging promotional appointments that coincide with a new tour, album release, or career milestone such as having a certified gold or platinum album. If there is a problem or concern that the label or artist have with the each other, the artist relations representative will seek to mediate the situation. The artist relations representative may also

advise the artist on creative/performance-related issues, as well.

Promotional Staffer

The prime function of the promotional staffer is contacting radio station program directors to generate airplay for the label's records. Promotional staffers will work closely with program directors, music directors, and disc jockeys in these markets. They set up appointments with these station people and bring a number of the label's new album releases, as well as a supply of promotional or press material relating to the artist or band. A promotional staffer may socialize frequently with program directors and music directors to help improve the chances that a radio station will add a song to its playlist. Promotional staffers often take key radio station personnel out to lunch, dinner, or for drinks. They may also bring a program director to a club in order to listen to a group play songs live and gauge audience response.

Advertising Account Executive

An advertising account executive develops advertising campaigns for a record label's products. This person must be creative and aggressive, have good sales skills, and have a strong knowledge of music. They may also have advertising experience in another area.

Salesperson (Record Label)

A record label salesperson establishes a relationship with various accounts to sell the company's products and provide continuing service to the accounts. Accounts may include retail stores, rack jobbers, and one-stops.

Regional Sales Manager

The regional sales manager is responsible for supervising the sale of the label's records to wholesalers and/or retail outlets in a specific region, creating sales campaigns and policies, and overseeing sales staff.

Marketing Representative

The marketing representative is responsible for overseeing specific markets and reporting sales of records to radio stations and trade publications.

Field Merchandiser (or Merchandiser)

The field merchandiser is in charge of distributing and explaining merchandising promotions to record stores/departments in specific markets.

Consumer Researcher

A consumer researcher researches and analyzes consumer-buying practices for the record company. This person should have knowledge of research and analytical methods, the ability to write reports, and knowledge of the music business and record industry.

College Representative (or Campus Representative)

College representatives are responsible for promoting a record label's products to students on campus or perhaps to music retailers. They are students working toward a degree who have an interest and/or skill in the music industry, and often are a music business major in college.

Music Publishing Business Careers

Music Publisher

Music publishers are responsible for acquiring the copyrights to songs and publishing them. They may work for a very large music publishing company and perform one or two specific duties as a music publisher. They may work for a relatively small firm and fulfill a variety of functions. Many individuals in music publishing or songwriting become independent music publishers, running their own music publishing firm. The goal of the music publisher is to find and acquire potential hit songs (copyrights) and songwriters, promote them for financial gain, and serve as copyright administrator whereby tracking, licensing, and payment collection can be done efficiently. A good music publisher has knowledge of all facets of the music business, an understanding of music industry dynamics, an ability to hear hit tunes, knowledge of copyrights laws, and contacts in the music business.

Song Plugger (Professional Manager)

Song pluggers or professional managers work for a music publisher and perform the administrative functions of music publishers. They also work to add new possible hits to the publisher's catalog and to find acts to record these songs, generating income for the publisher. Professional managers seek to have a song covered and recorded by as many artists as possible and attempt to make the tune a "standard." Song pluggers rely heavily on their contacts in the music business to accomplish their job and must have great communication skills. The song plugger may provide creative input into a band or artist's demo since they have a good understanding of what the industry is looking for.

Tour/Road Work Business Careers

Tour Coordinator

The tour coordinator is responsible for coordinating the many facets of an act's tour, including travel, lodging, arranging for services, and budgeting for expenses.

Road Manager

Road managers handle the problems that occur while an act is traveling. They supervise equipment, sound, and lighting personnel.

Tour Publicist

The tour publicist is responsible for publicizing an act's tour to both fans and the media through press releases, press conferences, and special promotions.

Advance Person

The advance person is responsible for arriving ahead of the act to prepare for a concert and assisting the tour coordinator or road manager with details prior to the show.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians are responsible for high-quality sound during the live performance. They usually arrive at the concert site before the performers and are involved in unloading and setting up the equipment and instruments along with the road crew. The sound technician supervises the placement of equipment and works with the talent during the sound check to achieve the best sound. They may even work a soundboard during the actual performance.

List courtesy of Berklee College of Music