

How To Attract A Personal Manager

By Gian Fiero

If you are a music artist with professional aspirations, chances are, one day you will need the services of a personal manager. Hopefully by that time you will have a full and complete understanding of what a personal manager is, what they do and what they don't do. This understanding will ultimately enhance the working relationship you have with them.

But how do you find a personal manager? It's a question that is raised at every seminar that I conduct and posted on many websites that often give vague and elusive answers. Now, once and for all, you will receive an honest and direct answer:

Don't go looking for a personal manager, let them find you.

Think about it. If you were a manager, what's the likelihood that you would manage some no-name artist that approached you out of the blue for management? The chances are very slim. The process of a manager courting you is very similar to the courtship that takes place between men and women: The majority of time, the pursuit starts with some fundamental attraction.

The same is true for the personal manager; he/she must find the prospect of managing you to be attractive (i.e. potentially lucrative or professionally advantageous). In the courtship between men and women, there is a point where attraction breeds desire, and the pursuit intensifies.

For the personal manager, this occurs when the music artist is in a position (financially) to justify their expenditure of time and energy, or has generated a strong "buzz" which makes them attractive and desirable to other prospective managers. Please note: The more attractive and desirable the music artist appears, the more relentlessly they are pursued by real personal managers (i.e. people that manage music artists for a living).

Answer this question before we go any further: How attractive and desirable do I appear to a real personal manager? Be honest with yourself. Having a CD or an unpolished band is simply not enough to make you attractive or desirable. The following are accomplishments that real personal managers find attractive:

- a. You have received great reviews AND news stories in the press about your band.
- b. You are receiving radio airplay.
- c. You are selling product (whether physical or digital)
- d. You are building a community of devoted followers.
- e. You have been offered a recording contract.

Let's go back to the parallels between men courting women to drive this point home about the importance of attractiveness. Once men and women develop a mutual attraction, and their desires are firmly established, you know what happens next...they pull on the brakes and ask; where is this going? (At least in the cases with the best outcomes.)

In the courtship of personal manager and music artist, the same thing must occur. The music artist must literally ask the same question: where is this going? Since the chief responsibility of the personal manager is to provide guidance and direction, it is imperative to find out where they can take you (based on knowledge, contacts, and experience), and how they intend accomplish it. Savvy artists also ask for achievements within a (realistic) specified time frame.

It is this stage of courtship that a personal manager will - and should - get the artist to sign a management agreement. This agreement officially acknowledges the terms, conditions, and expectations of the relationship. In the courtship between men and women, it is the equivalent of exchanging vows that constitute an official commitment between husband and wife.

So, if you need a manager, don't resort to asking a friend or a relative who knows absolutely nothing about personal management or the music industry to manage you (although many do because of trust issues). Spend the majority of your time making yourself more attractive and desirable to real personal managers. They are out there. You just have to give them a reason to come looking for you.

Gian Fiero is a recognized authority on commercial music and Independent A&R Specialist who is best known for writing song critiques on Muse's Muse.com. He has been an influential factor in obtaining record deals for artists signed to RCA, Bust It!, Gasoline Alley and Interscope Records.

He currently represents Grammy nominated music producer Cori Jacobs (Beyonce, Pussy Cat Dolls, Lauryn Hill, Teedra Moses, Brooke Valentine, and George Clinton) in addition to being an adjunct professor of music industry studies at San Francisco State University.

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