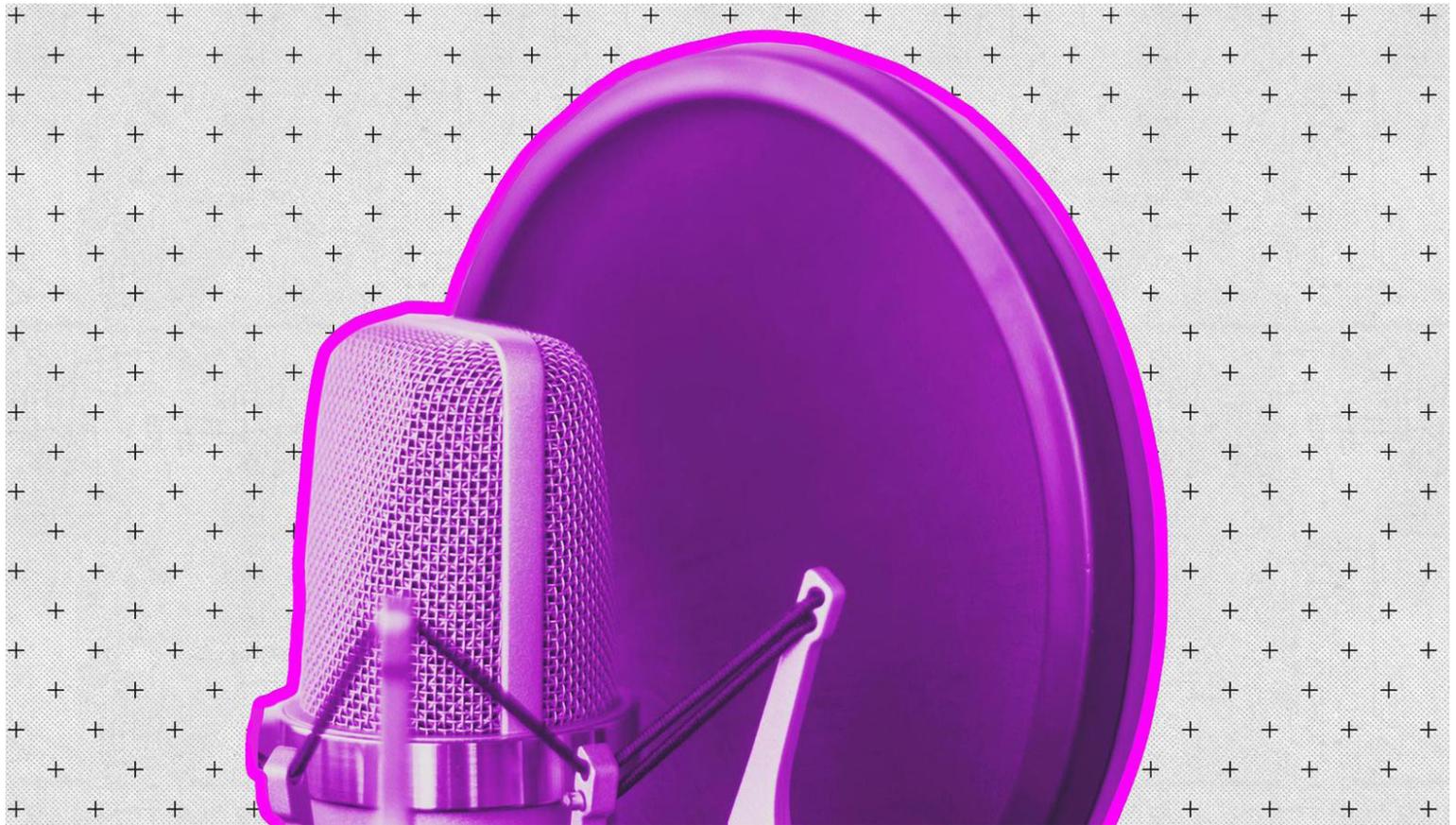


BACKSTAGE

How to Decide If You Need a Talent Manager for Your VO Career

By Kelley Buttrick



Q: Do you need a talent manager for your VO career?—Sam H.

The quick answer is no, but let's dive into some related questions that might help you decide.

First, is there a difference between a manager and an agent? The answer can be confusing. Screenwriter Anna Klassen says on the ScreenCraft blog, "Agents are about today. Managers are about tomorrow." Her definition rings true in the VO world, too. In my experience, the line between them is blurred in the voiceover industry and continues to get blurrier. An agent focuses on bringing work to the agency's roster, which tends to be larger than a manager's roster. Like agents, managers try to bring work to their roster. Agents, like managers, are dealing with casting directors and other voice booking entities, and both are interested in growing your career. The main difference in my own agent and manager relationships is in how they're paid. My agents take 10–20% of jobs they book for me. My managers take 10% of my total VO income, no matter where that income originated.

I receive auditions from both and book work through both. Both are willing to talk to me about areas where I'd like to expand my VO career and submit me as an individual and as part of a roster. Both also help amplify my branding efforts.

Could your VO career benefit from a manager? Yes, but it could also benefit from pursuing a variety of paths. Agents and managers are out there hustling to bring work to the talent they represent, but there's also a huge benefit to going out there and generating work on your own if you're a nonunion voice actor. Search social media groups, the internet, and Backstage for how to get VO work, and you'll be deluged with ideas. Make sure you have a variety of VO income streams rather than relying solely on one.

So, is a manager worth it? This answer is going to be different for each person. From a business perspective, you need to look at your ROI. From a growth perspective, you need to look inward to determine if your skills, network, and branding have grown. Ultimately, only you can decide if a manager is worth it.

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