

BOOK TO SCREEN

THE

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DEALMAKERS

HOW TO IDENTIFY WHICH PLAYERS
EVERY AUTHOR NEEDS ON THEIR TEAM

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There are a few types of dealmakers in the entertainment industry that every self-published or unpublished author needs to know about. **Each in their own way exist to make deals that kickstart the process** of creating a movie, television show, or webseries from the single germ of an idea.

Knowing these players, the functions they serve in the industry, and how to get into contact with them is absolutely crucial to **bringing your story to life without wasting time or relationship equity.**

But not all dealmakers are created equal. **Agents, Managers, and Producers** provide different services to the writer. We'll take the time today to explore these players in detail.



AGENTS

Agents control what projects high-end talent take on. They can work for actors, directors, and writers, and are **generally concerned with making successful transactions** rather than taking on passion projects.

Agencies are the big business of the dealmaking world. They're highly corporate, and specific in their scope. Most large agencies are made up of several departments with specific areas of expertise—everything from agents representing only Large Budget Drama Actors to those representing Television Comedy Directors and more.



UNITED TALENT
AGENCY



The biggest agencies in Hollywood include: CAA, ICM, WME, UTA, Gersh, Independent Artists, and Paradigm. These companies have busy rosters filled with big-name clients and a lot of clout in the industry, but little time for newcomers.



KohnerAgency



Smaller boutique agencies include the likes of The Alpern Group, Lenhoff & Lenhoff, Kohner, DPA, and APA. These agents tend to be jack-of-all-trades, more interested in looking for someone with many different skillsets and the potential to “make it big” in more than one area. They’ll also generally be more involved with the overall careers of their client roster.

PSYCHOLOGY OF AN AGENT:

Agents, as a rule, only seek out known talent with pre-existing track-records to represent. They're interested in sales and product, and will only bank on known quantities and quick and easy sales. This risk-averse mindset is crucial to keeping the Hollywood machine running, but it can also be daunting to the recent self-starter or self-published author. As the gatekeepers of the industry, agents do all they can to protect their clients' value by making it difficult for newcomers to break in.

Summary: Big business & known-talent focused. Difficult for emerging writers & authors to get their attention.

PRODUCERS

Producers are the driving force behind every step of bringing a project from script to screen. Especially crucial to getting your project seen can be the support of **up-and-coming producers** who are as hungry to get a brilliant idea to screen as you are to share your own brilliant idea with the world. Most are **simply looking for an idea they respond to and can sell to a market they know well**, and for that reason will be very well connected with players in a specific type or genre.

A relationship with a producer can be a relationship for life—they are investing as much as you are in bringing your story to the screen, and often bring their own ideas to the table as well. This can be a very good thing! These are professionals who know what they are doing in the film world, and their input can be a boon to your creative process and the marketability of your project.

PSYCHOLOGY OF A PRODUCER

Producers lead with passion, which is to say they are focused on ideas and stories they connect with (versus their agent/manager counterparts who are more transaction focused).

Summary: A producer is the most crucial relationship an emerging writer or author can make in the entertainment business—so make sure you're reaching out to the right ones. You'll want to look for a producer who is and up-and-comer and a real hustler who doesn't back down at rejection. The right producer can be your biggest advocate as well.

FINDING PRODUCERS

So how do you find the producer of your dreams who can take your project to the next level? Here, as with any foray into the entertainment business, **research is your best friend**.

With the advent of the Internet, it's easier than ever to find dealmakers who might be on the hunt for the Next Big Thing. Your job is to make sure you get in contact with the right people at the right time.

While **IMDB Pro** isn't a free resource, it's absolutely invaluable in finding contact information for producers. By searching films that are relevant to your project, it's just a click away to find the company, email, and telephone number of any executive who worked on them.

Variety, Hollywood Reporter, and Deadline are industry journals detailing the **latest sales, hires, fires, up-and-comers, and who's getting movies made on a daily basis**. They are used and read by Hollywood execs everywhere to keep up to date—as well as anyone trying to break into the business. **This is a great resource for tracking anyone you might want to get into contact with**. Take the time to familiarize yourself with their latest sales, and what they might be looking for.

MANAGERS

Managers have a lot of crossover with the roles of agents, but are generally **more focused on the long-term strategy and overall career development** for their clients.

Managers are more interested in making a long-term investment in writers, rather than focusing on one sale at a time. This is because managers have the **option of attaching themselves as a producer** to their clients' work, adding producer credit and back ends to their 10% fee.

Well-known managers include: Management 360, Anonymous Content, Circle Of Confusion, The Collective, and 3 Arts.



MANAGEMENT 360

ANONYMOUS
content

circle of confusion



3Arts

PSYCHOLOGY OF A MANAGER

Unlike agents, managers are more likely to reach out to up-and-comers who are gaining traction and the attention of the industry. They seek out consistent career writers they could depend on to make sales. Since they also deal with writers on a more long-term basis, they will more often than not look for someone they can trust and get along with.

Summary: While a more likely prospect than getting an agent, managers are still focused on clients who are already proving themselves in the industry.

THE ART OF THE COLD CALL

So now that you've got a name and a number, what's the next step to getting in touch with them?

First, Some Words of Caution: While producers are more likely to take an interest in an up-and-comer with a story that they're drawn to, it's still extremely difficult to get them to take your call or read your materials. When it comes down to it, the entertainment industry is a relationship business. Having someone make an introduction and/or building a genuine relationship is still the best method.

But, sometimes you'll still need to cold call. **Cold contacting** doesn't necessarily mean calling your target on the phone, although that's certainly a possibility. Sending them an email may be just as effective. This method simply refers to the practice of getting into contact with your target without being introduced by a mutual contact or friend. **Either way you decide to contact your target, remember that you will likely meet with some resistance.**

Much like a telemarketer or junk emailer, a cold caller can seem like an unwanted intrusion to many entertainment professionals. That's why it's incredibly important to follow these **four rules of thumb** whenever you solicit an industry target:

1. **Be Quick.** It's very likely that the executive or assistant you're contacting has a lot to deal with on any given day. You'll only have a few seconds to get their attention, so make them count!
2. **Be Interesting.** Let them know how your project is relevant to THEIR company and why YOUR voice should matter to them. Your presence should pique their interest in hearing more of what you have to say.
3. **Be Courteous.** Be respectful of the contact's time and attention span, and don't take it personally if they don't respond to your work immediately.
4. **Be Ready.** Prepare yourself for any kind of response you might get—from an outright no, to a tentative yes, to a request for a pitch of some of your other work or ideas...and anything in between. You don't want to be the writer who wasted an opportunity because they didn't plan ahead!



EXPERT TIP:

“No Unsolicited Material” is a response you’ll likely hear a lot of in Hollywood, and for good reason. This keeps them safe from claims of copyright infringement; so don’t take this response personally.

There’s no easy way to get around this answer, but one method is to offer to sign a submission release form. Another is ask the producer/exec if an entertainment attorney can submit your materials on your behalf (and then hire one).

Other things that can help are to make sure you have a pitch that’s compelling and attention-grabbing that doesn’t require you to send anything right off the bat. **Book trailers** are a great way to catch a producer’s eye, since they like to see how your story will translate into a visual medium. **Synopses, treatments, and blogs** are also great supporting materials that don’t require you to send an entire book along to a busy executive.

Remember, **persistence is key to seeing your book come to life on the screen**. Try new angles, new avenues, and don’t let frustration get the better of you. **The entertainment industry is a business of people**, and being able to understand their needs and connect to them on a personal level will get you a long way.

Keep writing, and keep hustling.

ABOUT VOYAGE MEDIA

Whether you are a filmmaker, screenwriter, author, or television commercial director, you know your story challenge is really two challenges. Movies, TV shows and branded entertainment don’t just need to be dreamed up - they have to get born.

This has always been the case. But today that second challenge is tougher than it’s ever been, with an industry in turnaround, an economy in casualty and your potential audience fragmented across a hundred media.

Voyage Media bridges the gap between existing industry players, ensuring your story not only gets crystallized but its chances of production, distribution and audience success are dramatically enhanced through our unique combination of high-level mentorship, business savvy, design, creative and marketing skill sets.

For more information, please visit voyagemedia.com