

Paintertainment

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So You Want to **BE** an **Agent**

by Gretchen Fleener

For our third and final newsletter on the subject of agents, this month we'll briefly discuss some pro's and con's of acting as an agent, as well as some of the things you may have to consider that you don't as an individual artist.

Working as an agent is certainly not for the faint of heart. It's one of those jobs that looks so much greener from the other side of the fence, but once you jump over, you may likely find your foot land in a hidden pile of dog poo! Haha! For this reason, it is important to do your research and carefully weigh the pros, cons, and responsibilities involved with being an agent. (And when I say an agent, I mean the "good" kind I define back in the March issue) Here are some things to consider!

The Pro's

Your capacity increases

Hiring out other artists does increase the number of gigs you are able to cover. (Though keep in mind that this brings with it many other cons associated with juggling multiple artists)

You can make more money

In the end, you can end up with a larger dollar amount in your pocket at the end of the year. Whether it is enough to be worth all the extra hours you're not paid hourly for to manage multiple artists though, is highly arguable!

You can have more family time

I do enjoy the ability to send other artists to gigs when I have a family event to attend instead! However, this does come with the constant possibility of someone not showing up or something going wrong, potentially requiring me to drop what I'm doing to fix it.

The Con's

Less Painty More Deskly

You will spend a LOT more time on the less fun part of the job than you will painting as an agent. This includes writing, sending, and chasing down artist contracts. (yes, you MUST have written contracts for your artists!) Writing, sending & chasing down payments from vendors. Fielding any and all emails & phone calls from clients, calming frantic clients, and smoothing over disasters. Getting recaps from all artists, thanking the clients, paying the artists, paying

the artists again when they lose a check or move without telling you, getting reviews and ratings from clients, and following up with clients the next year in hopes of getting the gig again.

Then there's just the business side that isn't directly related to events...advertising, marketing, maintaining websites and social media accounts, responding to requests for quotes, etc etc. If you don't get enjoyment out of the administrative side of your job, angenting is definitely NOT for you!

Meet Uncle Sam

As an agent you are required to provide a 1099-MISC form to every independent contractor whom you pay \$600 or more during any given calendar year. This can be quite an undertaking, especially if you haven't already collected social security numbers when originally hiring artists. Bookkeeping in general becomes much more complicated and time consuming when acting as an agent, and more important.

Handing Over Your Reputation

It is hard to express how difficult it is to hand over my baby to another artist. It is no reflection of their talent or capabilities of course, but more about the decades of blood, sweat & tears I have poured into making my business what it is today. The thought of one person having the power to hurt my business' reputation is sortof terrifying for a new agent! This is where you need to ensure that you are able to manage the expectations of both clients and artists, and handle sticky situations with grace.

Other Considerations

Cash Flow

Suddenly cash flow becomes incredibly important when you are responsible for paying artists. If you'll remember from our March article, a good agent doesn't make you wait until they get paid before you get paid. Making your artists wait to be paid more than a couple weeks for work they've already done is really unacceptable. As an agent it is imperative that you either require payment up front from your clients, or

manage your money in such a way that you are always able to pay your artists promptly when they perform for you. Ticking off your artists will only hurt you and your business in the end, so this is important!

Your Actual Income

Many artists who have had bad experiences with agents claim that agents are just getting rich off of their work. Let me tell you, this is oh SO not the case.

For the sake of easy math, let's say you charge \$100 per hour, and pay your artist \$80 per hour for a 1 hour birthday party. For that 1 hour party you're spending a conservative estimate of 2-4 hours on this gig, which makes you a whopping \$5-\$10 per hour. The wide range is affected by things out of your control...how difficult a client is, how difficult an artist is, etc. Some clients you have to go back and fourth several times to get it booked. Some artists you have to send and re send contracts to get them signed. Some paychecks you have to re-write as an artist moved and didn't give me their new address. The list of variables goes on and on. Then you have to subtract the money you spend to GET those gigs that you give to other artists...your website costs, advertising, gig site bidding fees, or whatever you use to bring in business.

You will be spending a lot more time on paperwork and people management than you will on painting as an agent, and with no set hourly rate like your artists receive. Though as long as you get enjoyment out of these aspects of business and can find a good balance, it can be worth your while! My suggestion is to start small, yet do it right from the beginning. Don't cut corners on bookkeeping or contracts. It's much easier to get the process down early on when you have 1 or 2 artists you frequently hire, rather than dozens! Starting small will enable you to see if being an agent is for you before it consumes your business. In a future issue of Wet Paint Magazine, I plan on doing a more in depth article on being an agent. I'd love to hear your experiences on the topic! Feel free to email me at Gretchen@Paintertainment.com if you'd like to share any insights or stories! 🌸

Now Shipping!

We are thrilled to announce that our new magazine, Wet Paint Magazine, is now shipping!

Wet Paint is a new kind of magazine for face and body artists. It is designed to inspire you with beautiful work, educate and entertain you with relevant articles about our industry, and instruct you with step by step designs, tips and techniques! It is a place where experienced and new artists alike can mingle, share, learn, and lift each other up. Our articles will be focused on topics that will help you learn and grow as an artist and a business person.

In this premier issue of Wet Paint, we've asked full time professionals what a college major in face & body art would entail. We've also interviewed Italian artist Matteo Arfanotti about his new ventures into painting handbags! Check out this issue for a recap of the 2016 JAMvention held in Belgium last fall, as well as an in-depth article on what it takes to successfully bring your kids into the fold of your business. In addition to galleries of face, belly, & body art, this issue includes some Q&A with kid artist Micah Vemu, entertaining answers from our latest Facebook poll, a trick for using daubers in jewelry painting, upcoming face & body art events, product reviews, and several step by step designs!

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