

# Illustration Agents

**As an illustrator, there will probably come a time in your career when you ask yourself,**

**'Should I get an agent?'**

**The first thing to consider is whether you really need one - will they offer you anything more than you can already achieve on your own?**

**Secondly, how do you go about choosing an agent that's right for you, and then how do you convince them to represent you?**

**And finally, once you're on an agency's roster, how do you keep them on your side and make the most of the relationship?**

**But first of all.....**

**‘What does an illustration agent do?’**

## **Finding Work:**

**Agents have access to a network of clients that you, as a freelancing artist, may not.**

**When an agent or agency looks at a potential artist for their roster, they want to make sure that they can be effective in finding work for them and that new artists that they represent will be effective at bringing work into their agency.**

## **Marketing Artists:**

Some agents will send out press releases to current or potential clients about their new or current roster of artists.

A lot of their work is in promoting the artists they represent, work that would take a lot of time an artist may not have if they want to keep working and creating art.

Additionally, they are skillful and experienced marketers, which not all artists themselves are.

## **Negotiating on Price:**

**Agents act as a go-between for clients and artists.**

**Part of the agreement of working with an agent is giving them a cut of what's made on projects (whether that cut is on all projects for a period of time or on projects they're involved in would be determined by your contract).**

**As such, they tend to negotiate fair compensation for the artist, often to industry standards, which not all artists may be able to do themselves.**

**Illustration can be a hard business, and having someone negotiating your work rates is a big boost.**

## **Legal Stuff Sorted:**

**Along with negotiating payment, agents and agencies will often take care of the legal side of your freelance business.**

**Having an agent can often mean someone has your back so you can focus on art and know your rights are covered thanks to their access to a lawyer.**

## **And More!**

**From portfolio advice to hitting goals with dream clients, being represented can open doors and contribute to a more stable income for a freelance artist.**

**Some artists with agents even work full-time in-house elsewhere and do their freelancing on the side.**

**It really depends on your needs as an artist, the needs of the agency, and the needs of clients.**

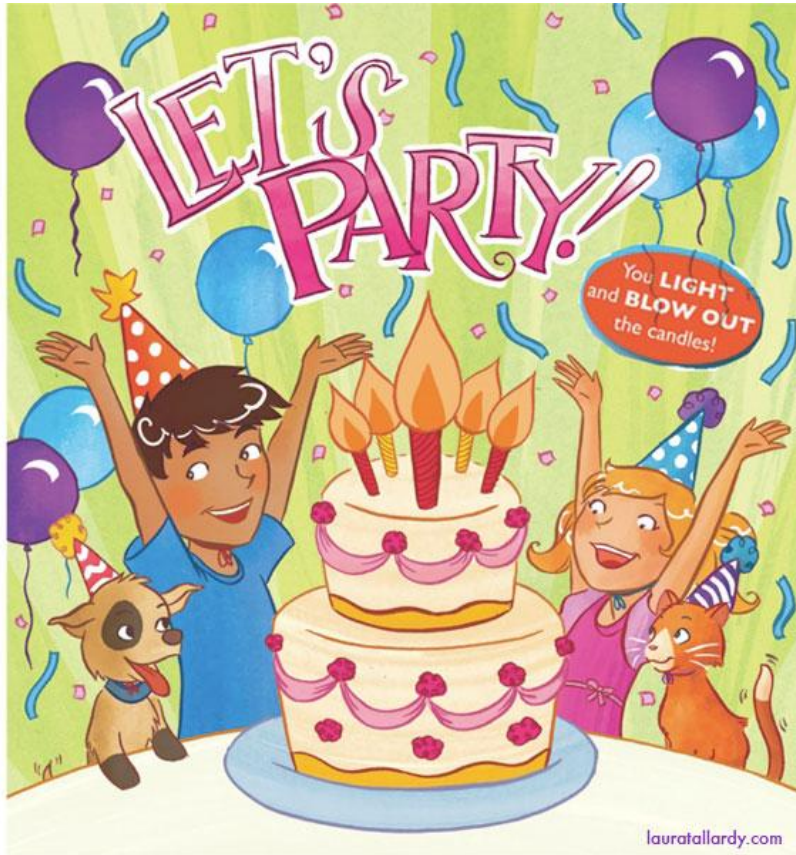
## **What are the benefits for an artist in having an agent?**

**Access to an established client roster**

**Someone always looking for new clients**

**Someone to negotiate good and fair pay for projects**

**Someone to have your back legally**



[Book illustration by Laura Tallardy](#)

*"The jobs I got through my agency were generally of a very high caliber. They have pre-existing relationships with art buyers from big companies and were able to get my work directly in front of the art buyers' eyes. An agent can't force a client to hire you, but they were able to show my work to a lot of the right people and I'm very appreciative for that!" — [Laura Tallardy](#), illustrator, formerly represented by [Morgan Gaynin](#)*

## **What are the benefits for an artist in having an agent?**

Another benefit is the community between the artists themselves within an agency.

Networking may take place between artists, perhaps set up by an agent or agency, or perhaps they'll be called upon to collaborate on a project.

Regardless, there's a camaraderie that can be built between artists represented by the same agency.

## **What are the benefits for an artist in having an agent?**

**When an artist doesn't see a benefit to having an agent, or an agency isn't finding the artist to be a boon to their company, contracts may end, allowing both parties to go on their way.**

**It's important to understand that artistic representation isn't for every artist, and not every artist is for every agent or agency out there.**



[Illustration by Neesha Hudson](#)

*"Red Fox is great at promoting work. My agent attends conferences and meets with publishers individually. They have clients coming to them specifically looking for an illustrator. Promotion falls on me as well (as it should)."*

*"Most recently my agent and I talked about going through a post card campaign. The great thing about my agent is she is always available and glad to help in whatever area I need."* [Neesha Hudson](#), illustrator represented by [Red Fox Literary](#)

## **Who represents artists?**

**I have provided a list of agents (at the end of this presentation as well as on Moodle)**

**Agencies may specialize in a particular geographic location or type of art.**

**Some agencies will only work with artists from their country or continent, while others will focus on international talent.**

## Who represents artists?

Some agencies will only focus on children's illustration, while others will take on any talented artists that they feel will be an asset to their business, regardless of their portfolio's specialty.

Understanding what an agency specializes in, who their clientele are, and what the other artists they represent do helps you to understand if an agent would be right for you.

*"I am represented by the Bright Group International. Bright represent under 300 artists, so it is much like a friendly community with artists and agents often getting in touch on twitter, encouraging each other and even occasionally meeting for parties.*

*"One of my favorite things about being with an agency (despite the influx of illustration work!) has been the ability to network with and discover other illustrators who I can really relate to."* [Lucy Fleming](#),  
illustrator, represented by [Bright Group International](#)



[Illustrations by Lucy Fleming](#)

## **How do artists get an agent?**

**For some artists, the agent finds them.**

**Much like freelancing in general, clients, agents, companies, and more may find an artist through projects they've completed, their online portfolios, their social media presence, or through some other facet of networking.**

**In these cases, agents or agencies are on the hunt for new talent and likely already feel that the artist would be an asset to their company and talent roster.**

## **How do artists get an agent?**

Artists may also submit work to agencies based on the guidelines outlined on the agency's website.

Often there is a page that answers how they'd like to be approached (a portfolio link, an email with images attached, etc.) and may even note what sort of artists they're keen on adding to their talent pool.

Additionally, this page may indicate that they're not taking on new talent and your efforts are better spent elsewhere.

## Let's make things Bright

We love seeing new work, and we'd love to see yours. Talent is exciting, and when you help it grow, it's incredible. We're proud of our ability to discover and establish new artists and authors. We're also proud that we still represent people who were with us when we first opened, and who've truly bloomed over the years. Could you be next?

## Submit Your Work

### Illustrators

Please upload a PDF with a minimum of 10 samples and a link to your website.

### Author-Illustrator Submissions

#### Picture Books

Please email [literarysubmissions@thebrightagency.com](mailto:literarysubmissions@thebrightagency.com) with the full text of your story with illustration samples.

#### Fiction & Non-Fiction

Please email [literarysubmissions@thebrightagency.com](mailto:literarysubmissions@thebrightagency.com) with your covering letter, synopsis, first three chapters and illustration examples in one PDF document.

#### Graphic Novels

Please email [literarysubmissions@thebrightagency.com](mailto:literarysubmissions@thebrightagency.com) with your covering letter,

E-mail address

Name

Portfolio url (if applicable)

Message

Please allow up to two months for a response to submissions. As we receive a high volume of submissions on a daily basis, we regret that we cannot respond to each and every one. We can only guarantee responses and feedback to submissions we are interested in pursuing further. We do not accept postal submissions.

No file chosen

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**SUBMIT**

## **How do artists get an agent?**

Often agencies have a deluge of submissions and may take a while to get back to you.

As such, flooding their inbox weekly would be a terrible idea.

Be patient, grow your skillset and work, and try again in the future.

## **How do artists get an agent?**

Or it may be that your particular type of work doesn't fit in with what an agent or agency has to offer.

Not all professional artists have an agent, or want an agent, of course.

## **How do artists get an agent?**

**If you're considering getting an agent, you should first think about what you want from them.**

**For example, are you looking for someone who'll promote your work for you, or someone who'll help you with the admin side of things?**

**Each agency has different strengths, so determining what you're looking for will help aid your search.**

**‘What should you include in your Portfolio  
when submitting to an Agency?’**



[Q&A: What Illustrations You Should Show in Your Book Portfolio](#)

## **What can't an agent offer you?**

**No agent can guarantee that they will get you more work. The good ones will prove to you that they will do all they can – either through direct portfolio viewings or social media or reputation – to help fill your diary.**

**Anyone who promises to make you a millionaire is to be avoided.**

## **What can't an agent offer you?**

Some artists have an expectation that the minute you have an agent you're going to instantly get a £50,000 advertising job but that's not how it works.

It usually takes a few months to seed out to contacts properly. This is done through face to face meetings, web and social media and printed publications.

Often an art director loves the work instantly but requires a little time to find the right brief.

## **How can you attract the attention of an agent?**

Once you've made the decision to pursue an agent, you'll need to get them to notice you.

Most agents get numerous submissions every day, so you'll want to stand out from the crowd.

Use social media and email, and get your work in front of as many good agents as you can.

Then follow up with new work and regular updates so they can see how you're developing.

## **How can you attract the attention of an agent?**

Not all agencies have the same ideas about the best way to get your work seen, though.

For a start you could send a polite email with a link to some well-presented work.

While some suggest sticking to emails, others say something physical sent via post is the best way to get noticed. Sometimes a postcard or something printed makes you stand out from the crowd.

## **What should you find out before approaching an agent?**

**Decide what you need an agent for and then look around for, and research, the ones that'll best suit your style and purpose.**

**Contact one of the artists already on their books and get some feedback from them.**

## **What qualities do agencies look for in an artist?**

**Even if you do manage to catch an agent's eye, that doesn't mean they'll agree to represent you.**

**After the initial introduction, artists need to prove that they've got the qualities that agencies need in order to be able to work well with them.**

## **What qualities do agencies look for in an artist?**

**Agents are constantly looking for something that they don't represent already.**

**They're not keen on having a portfolio of artists that all do the same thing so don't approach an agent if they've already got someone on their books who's well-known for doing something very similar or has a very similar style.**

## Choosing an agent

When you are still in the process of establishing yourself as an illustrator, you may not have your pick of the top agencies, but the first offer you get isn't always the best offer you are likely to get.

You should carefully consider each agency on different factors:

## Choosing an agent

How established are they? / Do they know what they are doing?

Do they have a good reputation? You should email other artists from the agency to get a review.

Location – This may not be as important as it once was, but an agency operating from a bedroom in a small village may not have the same opportunities as an agency in a big city.

## **Choosing an agent**

**Experience – How long has the agency been running?  
And what kind of client list do they have as a result?**

**How/when are you paid?**

**What is their commission rate?**

**Can you keep your existing clients?**

## Choosing an agent

You should not be paying any upfront fees to join an agency.

Some agencies charge a lot of different fees to the artists: For advertising in illustration books, for promotional items, etc.

You can't expect to go through your career without investing in promotion, and investing in illustration annuals and promotional items necessarily isn't a bad thing, but it should be your choice.

## Choosing an agent

All agencies are different, but make sure you ask the right questions before joining.

Remember that agents negotiate on a daily basis, so any terms that you aren't happy with, try and negotiate them.

A good agent will respect you for doing it. If they are unwilling to negotiate, maybe they aren't a good fit for you.

## Choosing an agent

Agents join associations just like artists do. It benefits the industry as a whole if all agents are on the same page. Here are a couple of links to the Association of Illustrators and Society of Artists Agents websites:

**AOI code of practice for agents:**

<https://theaoi.com/resources/professional-practice/code-of-practice-for-agents/>

**SAA code of ethics for agents:**

<http://saahub.com/ethics/>

## Choosing an agent

At the end of the day, if you work with an agent, you are paying for a service.

Some artists are of the opinion that agents take too much money away from them. You may pay 30% of the fee for a job, but you might not have got the job in the first place without the agent's help.

An agency is a business that provides a service to illustrators, and they should be paid for it.

## List of Illustration Agents

## Business of Illustration – Illustration Agents

Plum Pudding Illustration Agency: <http://www.plumpuddingillustration.com>

Agency Rush: <http://agencyrush.com>

Folio Illustration Agency: <http://www.folioart.co.uk>

Illozoo – The Visual Communication Agency: <http://www.illozoo.com>

Arena Illustration: <http://arenaillustration.com>

Central Illustration Agency: <https://centralillustration.com>

Lemonade Illustration Agency: <https://www.lemonadeillustration.com>

Heart: <https://heartagency.com>

The Bright Agency: <https://thebrightagency.com>

Handsome Frank Illustration Agency: <https://handsomefrank.com>

Owl Illustration Agency: <http://www.owlillustration.com>

Eye Candy Illustration agency: <http://www.eyecandyillustration.com>

## Business of Illustration – Illustration Agents

Meiklejohn: <http://www.meiklejohn.co.uk>

Inky Illustration Agency: <https://www.inkyillustration.com>

MP Arts: <http://www.mp-arts.co.uk>

The Artworks Illustration Agency: <http://www.theartworksinc.com>

Illustration Ltd: <http://www.illustrationweb.com>

Breed: <https://breedlondon.com>

Good Illustration Agency: <https://www.goodillustration.com>

Jelly: <https://www.jellylondon.com>

**LINK to The Bright Agency's *Artist Handbook***

[https://issuu.com/brightgroupinternational/docs/bright s artist handbook](https://issuu.com/brightgroupinternational/docs/bright_s_artist_handbook)

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## Your Task

*How it works!* Be a detective.....

**WHO is commissioning WHAT?**

Beginning with the list of illustration agents I have given you, and others you have discovered independently, examine the illustrators represented.

Research those whose work appeals to you, and the way you like to work:

- 1. What sort of commissions have they worked on? (editorial, advertising, publishing etc.).**
- 2. Who commissioned the work? Book Publishers/Advertising Agencies/Design Groups/Magazines etc. Investigate the commissioning companies/art directors etc.**

**3. Could you see your work fitting into these areas of illustration? How can move your work forward to develop a portfolio that will get you the commissions you want.**

**4. Make a directory of possible sources of commission with names and contact details etc.**